ROCK CANDY

FOR THOSE WHO WERE RAISED ON ROCK

October - November 2018

WARRANT
THE MAKING OF 'CHERRY PIE'

KIX
SERIOUSLY UNDERRATED

DAY ON THE GREEN
AMERICA'S BIGGEST PARTY

BE-BOP DELUXE · REO SPEEDWAGON · JAMES GANG · DORO PESCH · SLADE · SAIGON KICK

KIM MITCHELL · TED NUGENT · KING'S X · IAN HUNTER · ROUGH DIAMOND · CELTIC FROST

GUNS N' ROSES

WELCOME TO THE JUNGLE. LIFE AND DEATH ON SUNSET STRIP

ALSO: YES ANALYSED BY STEVE STEVENS. BAD COMPANY – THE BRIAN HOWE YEARS. METALLICA V WINGER – THEIR '90S BEEF. ZZ TOP'S BILLY GIBBONS – "IT'S ALL ABOUT TUNING AND TIMING"

LYNYRD SKYNYRD

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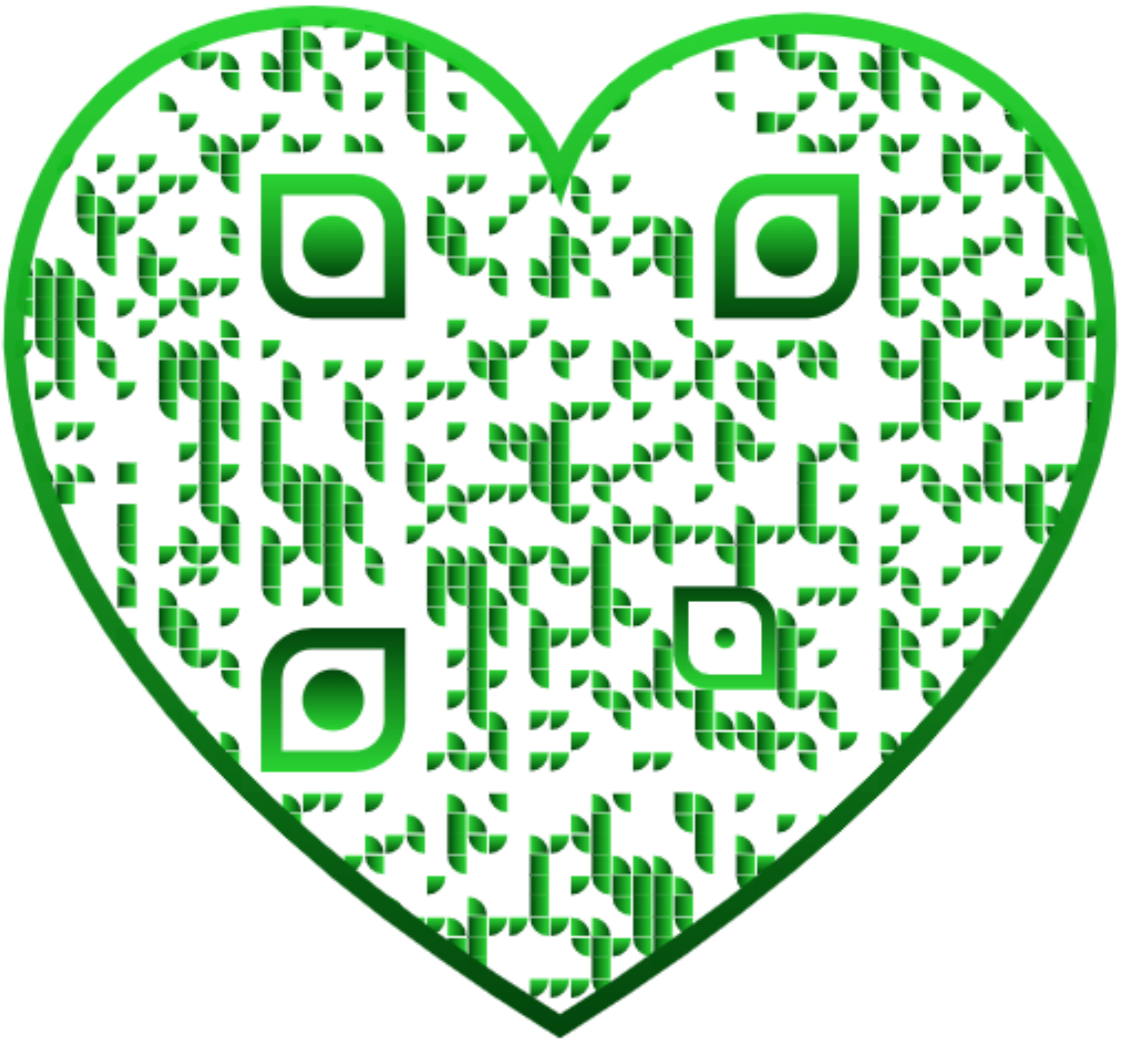

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ROCK CANDY

WELCOME

ONCE AGAIN WE FIND ourselves bereft of another Southern rock hero. This time it's guitarist Ed King of Lynyrd Skynyrd, a talented player but also a keen songwriter who co-penned such classic tracks as 'Workin' For MCA', 'Whiskey Rock-A-Roller', 'Saturday Night Special' and, perhaps most famously, 'Sweet Home Alabama'. In fact, on the latter song it's Ed's voice you can hear right at the start counting in 'one-two-three', before unleashing one the most recognisable riffs in rock. King only stuck around for three albums before leaving Skynyrd in 1975, but his workload with them was impressive. He later reunited with a rejuvenated band in 1987, but after several years of hard touring was struck down with a heart condition that sadly forced him to quit the band for the final time in 1996.

I MENTION this loss because, before we heard the news of Ed's passing, we'd already decided to feature a major piece on Lynyrd Skynyrd, arguably the last of the great Southern rock bands still treading the boards. We were trying to narrow down our focus on the story when we suddenly remembered that our old colleague, *Sounds* journalist Pete Makowski, penned one of the most amazing features we'd ever read. The piece detailed an American road trip that Pete undertook with the band in 1976, including all its multi-faceted madness and decidedly non-PC antics. Pete's story places you right at the heart of the band's tornado of activity, giving us perhaps the definitive insider experience of Skynyrd. Certainly it's a view that was never bettered – please carve out an hour or so of your time and read this piece.

ELSEWHERE IN this issue we've compiled a fascinating overview of the early Guns N' Roses story, focusing on the band's formation and their imperial place in LA's mid-'80s Sunset Strip metal explosion. HoJo went deep on this one, so I'll leave it to him to whet your appetite in his Letter From The Editor. We've also compiled some great retro news items from 1977, including long overdue spotlights on the formidable Be-Bop Deluxe, former Uriah Heep vocalist David Byron's comeback troupe Rough Diamond, the Heavy Metal Kids – who crafted a mini-masterpiece with 'Kitsch' – and Ian Hunter's now classic 'Overnight Angels' album. Such fascinating content is what gets my adrenalin pumped in a world of mainstream mediocrity.

Read on and be amazed!
Derek Oliver – Master Of Mayhem
derekoliver@rockcandymag.com

ROCK CANDY
HARD, SWEET & STICKY

E-mail: editorial@rockcandymag.com
Website: www.rockcandymag.com

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THIS ISSUE'S BIG QUESTION – WHAT WOULD YOU NAME YOUR AOR BAND?

THE TEAM
Owner and Publisher: Derek Oliver
Derek Oliver's Willesden Green née Kroydon
Editor: Howard Johnson
Primp
Editor At Large: Malcolm Dome
Sentient Melody
Art Director: Andy Hunns
Crème Brulée
Production Editor: Louise Johnson
Peach Melba
Creative Direction: Julia Melanie Goode
OER Slow Wagon
Web Guy: Ross Sampson
Limp Wrist
Social Media Guru: Michael Brandvold
Warm Wind

CONTRIBUTORS
Paul Elliott
Van Der Kirkhoff
Jerry Ewing
Clam Haven
Giles Hamilton
Selhurst Park
Jon Hotten
Repeat Offender
Dave Ling
Lover's Tiff
John Nicholson
White Yacht
Dave Reynolds
Satin Ragz
Xavier Russell
Alien Notes
Paul Suter
Liplock

PHOTOGRAPHY
Gene Ambo
Getty Images
Julia Goode
Ross Halfin
IconicPix
Tony Mottram
Mark Weiss – www.weissguygallery.com

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LIFE AND DEATH ON SUNSET STRIP

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

I was scanning the Internet as I wrote this Ed's Letter, looking for the exact date when *Kerrang!* magazine published my five K review of Guns N' Roses' debut album, 'Appetite For Destruction'. It turned out to be issue 151, dated 23 July 1987. While searching I stumbled on a piece written by Ben Hughes for a website called *Über Röck*. Ben was kind enough to say he bought 'Appetite...' the week it came out "after reading the *Kerrang!* review from Howard Johnson. I always remember the review saying this was not heavy metal, this was a rock'n'roll album. I was intrigued." Two things struck me about this. First, reviews *really* mattered back in the day. Not like now, when people can always hear music for themselves to decide what they think. And second, I'm very happy I made the right call on Guns. It *is* a rock'n'roll record. It's *not* a heavy metal record. And what's more, I was even correct when I made the more outrageous claim that 'Appetite...' was "the most exciting rock release of the past three years."

When I wrote that review over 30 years ago, however, I had no idea about the Guns N' Roses backstory; how Axl, Slash, Duff, Izzy and Steven had come together and what unique set of circumstances had made them such a compelling force. I had no clue, either, that they were going to become the most important rock band since Zeppelin. All I knew was that I really, *really* rated their album and that they were *way* better than the rest of the Sunset Strip sleaze competition.

Incredibly, *Kerrang!* chose not to make 'Appetite...' the issue's lead review. That honour went to White Lion's 'Pride', while releases by Shark Island, Demon, Joe Walsh, Paul Di'Anno's Battlezone, Grim Reaper, and Smack all appeared in the pages before Guns. It sounds utterly laughable now. Even so, who would have thought that more than 30 years later we at *Rock Candy* would be dedicating fully 16 pages to the very earliest days of this most remarkable of bands? Nobody, of course. But time, the greatest arbiter, has proved that even given their 'oh so humble' beginnings, Guns N' Roses really have become true giants of rock music..

Howard Johnson – Editor
Email me at **hojo@rockcandymag.com**

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Cover photo: Guns N' Roses by Mark 'Weissguy' Weiss. Photoshop work on Guns N' Roses cover image by Nicolas Sénégas.
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ROCK CANDY VIDEO PLAYLISTS

THERE'S GREAT ROCK MUSIC ALL OVER YOUTUBE, THE PROBLEM IS FINDING IT. SO LET US TAKE THE PAIN OUT OF SEARCHING WITH OUR EASY-TO-ACCESS VIDEO PLAYLISTS. SIMPLY TYPE THE WORDS IN BRACKETS INTO YOUR YOUTUBE SEARCH BOX... AND ROCK!

FIVE MELODIC ROCK GEMS FROM AUSTRALIA!

Chosen by Rob Evans

Ice Tiger – 'Running For Cover' (Ice Tiger Perth WA)
An obscure outfit from Perth in Western Australia, Ice Tiger issued their solitary album, 'Love 'N' Crime', in 1991, then disappeared without trace. This promo video sees singer Dave Crosby wearing some natty threads throughout. With more costume changes than a Cher show, Crosby resembles a Poundland version of Dave Lee Roth. Worth a watch for this alone.

D'Mont – 'Close To The Edge' (Demont Close To The Edge Single)
While Sydney's D'Mont make good use of an abandoned building here, the main action takes place beachside and centres on singer Craig Morrison's billowing white shirt and tousled blond locks in a tale of unrequited love that also includes some fine keytar action. Hard to believe a band this lightweight once supported Mötley Crüe on an Australian jaunt, though.

Roxus – 'Body Heat' (Roxus - Body Heat)
Roxus featured the undeniable talents of vocalist Juno Roxus on this parping '80s banger of Bon Jovi-esque proportions. Quite why he decided to dress like a reject from hit film *Flashdance* in this video is anybody's guess. But never mind, let's check out Juno's top moves and his excellent facial expressions, while feeling his body heat, of course.

Southern Sons – 'Heart In Danger' (Southern Sons - Heart In Danger)
Originally called The State, Southern Sons are arguably one of Australia's best-kept melodic rock secrets. This ultra-catchy little ditty was the band's first single, becoming a Top Five smash in their homeland when it was released back in 1990. Lead singer Jack Jones (real name Irwin Thomas) bears something of a resemblance to Mark Slaughter in a video that's all about the hair.

White Widdow – 'Surrender My Heart' (White Widdow Surrender My Heart Official Video)
After looking at this pomp rock gem, you'd be forgiven for thinking White Widdow frontman Jules Millis stepped straight out of 1989 into a video that was shot just two years ago. There's a heartbreaking moment around the one-minute mark when Journey, Nightranger and Survivor T-shirts are thrown out of the window by a 'wronged' girlfriend. Any lass who does that to a man deserves to be given a straight red. But Millis is obviously a forgiving chap, as the end of this video proves.

FIVE SONGS FEATURING SIRENS

Chosen by Paul Elliott

Judas Priest – 'Breaking The Law' (Judas Priest Breaking The Law 1980)
The title of this immortal anti-authority anthem demanded the inclusion of a siren. Anything less would have been, well, criminal... The promo video is also a classic, with Priest staging a bank robbery armed only with guitars, then making their getaway in a rather conspicuous American gas-guzzler as a police siren rings out. Daft, but delightful!

Saxon – 'Freeway Mad' (Saxon Freeway Mad (Live))
In 1980, Saxon delivered not one, but two classic albums in 'Wheels Of Steel' and 'Strong Arm Of The Law'. The latter's title track cried out for a siren, but damn, the band had already deployed this trick on the preceding album's manic speed-freak anthem, 'Freeway Mad'. This live performance – complete with sirens – gives us the classic Saxon line-up at its peak, with vocalist Biff leading from the front while dressing to the side in ball-crushing silver spandex.

Kiss – 'Firehouse' (Kiss Firehouse (Live 1975).fly)
In thrilling black-and-white live footage from 1975, Kiss deliver 'Firehouse' in typically over-the-top fashion. Paul Stanley starts the song wearing a firefighter's helmet – it's never too literal for our Paul – and Gene Simmons breathes fire as the song reaches its siren-blaring climax. If all that wasn't enough, Paul provides an enjoyably hammy finale as he exclaims, "Fi-er-house! Woo!"

Thin Lizzy – 'Jailbreak' (thin lizzy jailbreak BBC top of the pops 1976)
There was no cooler rock star than Phil Lynott, and he really looked the business in this TV performance from 1976, wearing mirror shades as he warns, famously, *"Tonight there's gonna be a jailbreak, somewhere in the town..."* Watch closely as guitarists Scott Gorham and Brian Robertson get the giggles, and as members of the audience continue disco-dancing while the sirens wail.

Black Sabbath – 'War Pigs' (Black Sabbath Warpigs Live At Ozzfest 2005)
The greatest heavy metal band of them all, the original line-up, playing on the holy ground of Donington, and opening the set with 'War Pigs'. Really, what could be better? Adding an air raid siren, perchance? Ozzy has the crowd going nuts even before they're given that particular treat. The band's power is simply staggering, and Ozzy's face is an expression of pure joy.

FIVE TUNES THAT TAKE YOU FOR A RIDE

Chosen by Xavier Russell

Foghat – 'Slow Ride' (Foghat Slow Ride Live in Detroit 1976)
This is the longest version of the Foghat classic I've ever heard, clocking in at a staggering 12 minutes and 16 seconds! Rod 'The Bottle' Price opens proceedings with a two-minute masterclass in superlative slide guitar playing, before he's rudely interrupted by frontman 'Lonesome' Dave Peverett, who simply asks, "Now are you ready to take a 'Slow Ride'?" What follows will take your breath away. The duelling guitars of Peverett and Price are simply joyous and the live concert footage is decently shot for a change. You can actually see every member of the band!

Doc Holliday – 'Last Ride' (Doc Holliday - Last Ride + Never Another Night HABACH 06/2011)
The Wonder Band from Dixieland kick out the jams here with a barnstorming rendition of 'Last Ride', filmed in Habach, Germany, on the band's 30th anniversary farewell tour in 2011. The cameraman does a sterling job, getting right down the front and parking himself between Bruce Brookshire and bassist John Samuelson, who take it in turns to mug into the lens. Bruce Brookshire's voice has never sounded better, especially when he snarls *"Ridin' two wheel thunder from heaven to hell."* Great Southern rock in a sweaty club setting.

AC/DC – 'Ride On' (AC/DC - Ride On from Plug Me In))
AC/DC gave a rare live performance of 'Ride On' – with the whole band wearing France footy tops – at the Stade De France, Paris, on 22 June 2001, during the 'Stiff Upper Lip' tour. Brian Johnson takes a puff on his cigarette and drawls, "This is a Bon Scott song," as the slow guitars of Angus and Malcolm start to drive this classic blues boogie along. Johnson does a good job in honour of Bon and there's a great Angus Young solo toward the end as he prances up and down the extended 'Parisian Walkway', sending the crowd suitably bonkers.

Journey – 'Still They Ride' (Journey Still They Ride (Live In Tokyo 1983) HQ)
This was filmed at the Budokan in Tokyo on 3 March 1983 when Journey were the most popular AOR band on the planet and could do no wrong. This particular version of the classic from 'Escape' is the best I've ever heard, thanks mainly to frontman Steve Perry's incredible vocal range. When he hits those high notes there's no holding him back. *"Whoaaahhhh, Whoaaahhhh, Whoaaahhhh."* Shame Perry left the band, but this flawless clip will bring back fond memories.

Boston – 'Hitch A Ride' (Boston Hitch A Ride 12/7/1988, Hamilton, ON)
This footage is not great quality – it's filmed from up in the gods at the Copps Coliseum, a former ice hockey stadium in Hamilton, Ontario. But nonetheless, this is a great visual reminder of how good Boston were when they still had Brad Delp on vocal duties and the band were promoting their 'Third Stage' album. Check out Tom Scholz's magical excursions up and down the fretboard, particularly on the two and half minute intro to the song. And let's not forget Brad Delp's soaring vocals as he reaches up to that memorable chorus. *"Gonna hitch a ride, head for the other side."* Superb!

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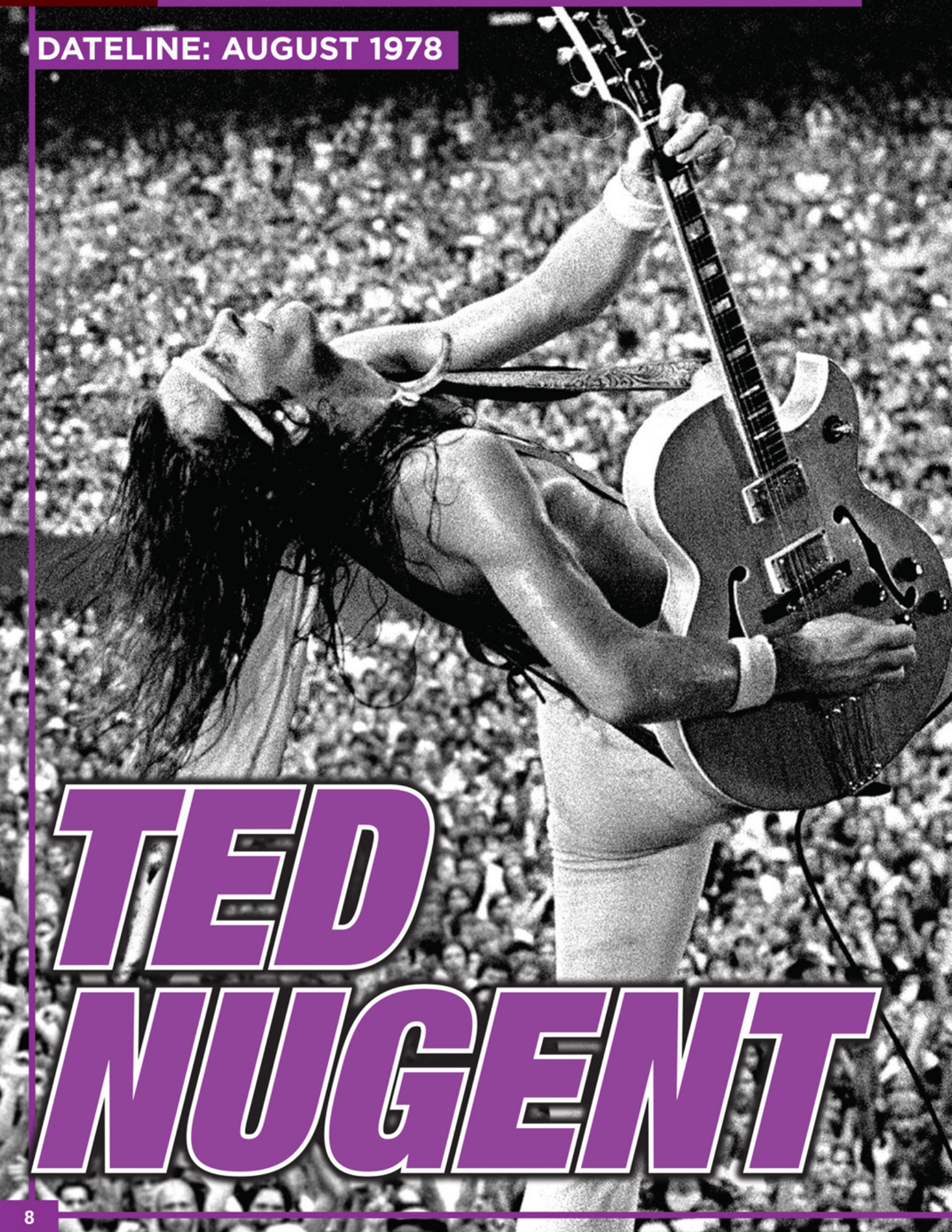
FROZEN IN TIME

DATELINE: AUGUST 1978



TED NUGENT

Was there ever a finer sight than the Motor City Madman in full flight?

IT'S NOT NEWS THAT Ted Nugent's got a big mouth. Ever since Theodore Anthony Nugent came thrusting out of Chicago wailing with The Amboy Dukes way back in 1965, the guitarist has gathered endless column inches thanks to his outspoken, hyper-speed jive talking. Since time immemorial Nugent has polarised opinions – even among dedicated rock fans – for his views on hunting, politics, drugs, guns, and women. But because of all the loud-mouthin' and the trash talking, there's one thing about the man that's sometimes been overlooked; Nugent's music.

NO ONE can claim that Ted's 50-year plus career has been consistently stellar. Surely nobody in their right mind would ever call 1986's 'Little Miss Dangerous' anything other than unmitigated drivel. But when he's been on his game – and that has been often – the Nuge has kicked out some of the nastiest jams ever laid down either by or for humanity. If you like unadulterated guitar-dominated hard rock'n'roll, listening to 1978's 'Double Live Gonzo!' is something akin to an out-of-body experience. Here Nugent really puts his Gibson Byrdland to the sword over the course of 11 insane numbers. To give you some idea of the uncompromising nature of this release, the longest song, 'Hibernation', clocks in at 16 minutes and 54 seconds, and throughout the double disc Ted raps and rolls like there's no tomorrow, a deranged rock version of a circus ringmaster, exhorting the audience to will him to ever greater feats of rock daring.

WHEN NUGENT was in his solo pomp between 1975 and 1980, there were few who could touch him for sheer unhinged musical brutality. His riffs were heavy, yet they still grooved. And his raps were the stuff of legend. His 'stream of consciousness' effort on 1980's 'Wango Tango' is a personal highlight.

"It's the crazed gyration of the rock generation, it's my motivation to avoid the nauseation, frustration when I need some lubrication... BABYYYY!"

Well, who could possibly argue with that? And what exactly is nauseation?

NUGENT WAS at the very peak of physical condition at the time too. Always a man to eschew the use of recreational drugs, Ted looked fit as a butcher's dog, treating his shows as nothing less than a full-on physical workout right in front of his adoring public. His highly visual stage antics matched the insanity of the music and offered the complete rock package. I remember seeing Ted at the Manchester Apollo in 1980, entering the stage swinging from a rope, Tarzan-style, dressed in nothing more than a loincloth. He certainly got my attention!

THIS WONDERFUL shot of Ted, right in the groove and in his natural habitat, was shot at Giants Stadium at Meadowlands, East Rutherford, New Jersey on 6 August 1978. It captures everything that was amazing about the self-proclaimed Motor City Madman. When anthropologists look to explain the beast that was '70s rock music in years to come, all they'll need to do is flag up this photo...

HOWARD JOHNSON

Photo: Getty Images/Ron Pownall

STEP BACK IN TIME

APRIL–MAY 1977

ROCK CANDY'S DAVE LING LEAFS THROUGH THE BACK PAGES OF THE UK ROCK PRESS TO BRING THE BIG NEWS ITEMS OF THE DAY BACK TO LIFE AND ANALYSE HOW THOSE STORIES REALLY PLAYED OUT…

Be-Bop Deluxe L-R: Andrew Clark (keyboards), Charlie Tumahai (bass), Bill Nelson (guitar and vocals), Simon Fox (drums)

"BE-BOP DELUXE DON'T HAVE A HEART"

DATELINE: 2 APRIL 1977
MAGAZINE: *MELODY MAKER*

NOW THAT MOST MAGAZINES employ genre-specific experts, certain aspects of publishing during the 1970s look almost prehistoric. Why would *Melody Maker* dispatch a writer known to hate Be-Bop Deluxe to one of the group's concerts? Harry Doherty made no secret of his disdain for the band, starting his review with the words "Be-Bop Deluxe bore me stiffer than a corpse in a deep freeze, but Bill Nelson will say that's because my heart is made of stone. And I would say that Be-Bop Deluxe don't have a heart."

Here in early '77, the British art-rockers were still touring the previous year's 'Modern Music' album, a record that would prove to be their biggest seller. Be-Bop were pretty much at the top of their game. But Doherty saw them as a group ripe for assassination.

NOBODY COULD accuse the writer of sitting on the fence, and his diatribe certainly caused controversy among *Maker* readers. Doherty judged Be-Bop's Hammersmith Odeon show in London as "soulless" and "about as exciting as this year's League Cup Final", a dull-as-dishwater clash between the football teams Aston Villa and Everton that took three attempts to settle.

"Nelson, the band's leader, guitarist, writer and producer, doesn't have anywhere near the right rock'n'roll credentials [to front a rock'n'roll band]," Doherty claimed, "although I must admit there are riffs here and there, like on 'Forbidden Lovers', that are striking. Also he's not a very good vocalist.

"The songs' arrangements are overloaded and too constricted, since Nelson ties his band to a framework which they cannot break," Doherty continued, namechecking a more spontaneous song called 'Smile' that met with his approval: "Even Nelson admitted [that its appeal] owed more to the mood of the rest of the band, particularly the rhythm section of bassist Charlie Tumahai and drummer Simon Fox, than to the songwriter's intention."

Another of Doherty's beefs was that the band attempted – and failed – to impress with their "supposedly intricate arrangements," seeking to "whitewash the incompetence by using slides and films, which again only serve to emphasise the rigidity of the music."

DOHERTY CLOSED with an olive branch to the band's fans, yet still used it to poke them all in the eye.

"Someone, somewhere likes Be-Bop Deluxe, and that's fair enough," the review closed. "But I think Nelson is conning them into believing he's progressive. Real rock music, for all its forms, is about spontaneity and excitement."

Cheekily, Harry signed off: "If you hadn't guessed, I don't like 'em."

Photos: Getty Images/Ian Dickson/Redferns; Getty Images/Richard E. Aaron/Redferns

ROCK CANDY SAYS...

HARRY DOHERTY PASSED AWAY in 2014. Back in the day, the *MM*'s man was probably wrong to question the principles of Bill Nelson. A little more than a year after the review, and feeling constrained by the structure of a permanent band, Nelson would astonish his fans by breaking up Be-Bop Deluxe after a fifth and final album. That record, 'Drastic Plastic', was unlike any of the band's previous work, drenched in the influence of punk, new wave, and David Bowie's Berlin albums.

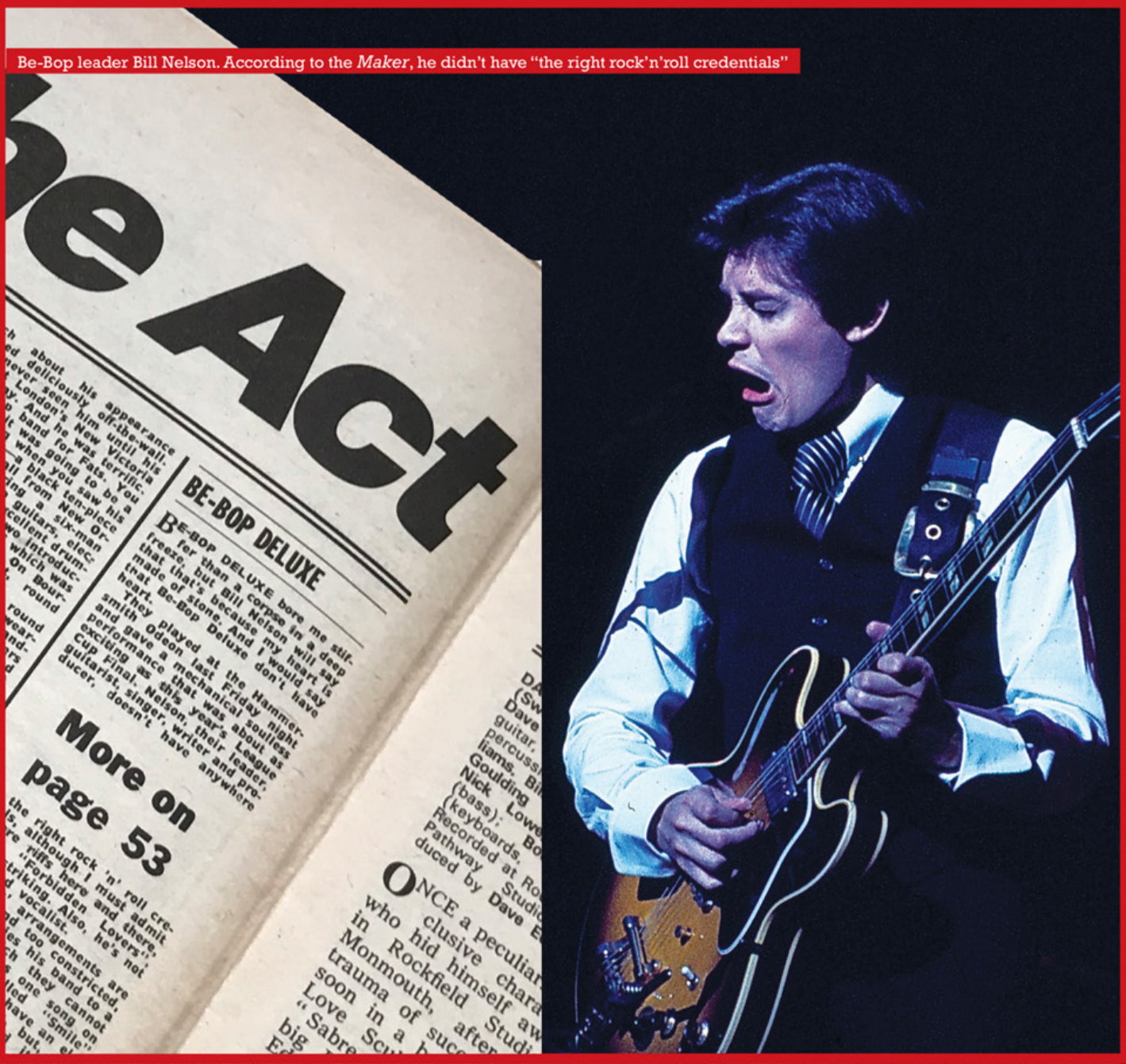
Doherty might well, then, have lambasted Nelson for being some kind of turncoat, but you have to admire the strength of Bill's convictions. Four decades later Be-Bop Deluxe are among a select few popular acts of the era to have rejected proposals of a reunion, despite Nelson having opted to celebrate the anniversaries of particular eras in his career.

THE SINGER and guitarist had wanted to put a stop to Be-Bop Deluxe even before 'Drastic Plastic' had been recorded. But with the band making inroads Stateside his managers had persuaded him to release one final album, perhaps in the hope that he'd change his mind after achieving success there.

"I'd wanted to set up a band that wasn't a band, one that was totally flexible and the members of which could change album by album," he said years later, explaining that the 'Drastic Plastic' release really served as a precursor for his next group, Red Noise, who were very much ahead of their time.

AFTER ALMOST a half-decade as a recording artist, Nelson's admirers are legion, including Paul McCartney, Brian May, Kate Bush, Brian Eno, David Sylvian, Dave Grohl and many others.

Having lost the hearing in his right ear he can no longer perform live, but Nelson nevertheless continues to write and record. At the last count, the super-prolific musician has released more than 100 records. Lazy is not a word you can attach to him! Should you require a career précis, the eight-CD boxed set 'The Practice Of Everyday Life' was issued in 2011.



Be-Bop leader Bill Nelson. According to the *Maker*, he didn't have "the right rock'n'roll credentials"

STEP BACK IN TIME

Rough Diamond L-R: Clem Clempson (guitar), David Byron (lead vocals), Willie Bath (bass), Geoff Britton (drums), Damon 'Butch' Butcher (keyboards)

IS A ROUGH DIAMOND A HARD ROCK?

DATELINE: 7 MAY 1977
MAGAZINE: *MELODY MAKER*

RAY COLEMAN VISITED LONDON'S Marquee Club for the British debut of a band "being ballyhooed as the next big thing." Rough Diamond trumpeted the return of three well-known individuals – Uriah Heep's co-founding lead vocalist David Byron, ex-Colosseum/Humble Pie guitarist Clem Clempson, and drummer Geoff Britton from Wings and East Of Eden. The Rough Diamond line-up was completed by keyboard player Damon Butcher and bassist Willie Bath.

Melody Maker had already given the band a thumbs up, declaring that Byron was "singing better than he ever did with Heep" and praising Clempson, "who provides the most musically exciting moments." The paper was prepared to predict: "You will walk away... stunned." But would Coleman deliver the same positive verdict?

THE WRITER was quick to note Rough Diamond's presentation skills, observing with a degree of sarcasm: "Nothing goes wrong with this band. They're a crew of hardened professionals. The singer has absolutely mastered microphone twirling, and the lead guitarist's facial contortions are on cue."

Resisting the temptation to revisit past glories, Rough Diamond concentrated on material from their debut album, save for a lively remake of the old Smokey Robinson & The Miracles gem 'You've Really Got A Hold On Me'. That Coleman described the group's original tunes as "workmanlike" said it all.

"For the most part," Coleman wrote, "it was a computerised, mechanical set which left you with a feeling similar to that after a meal in a motorway restaurant – full, but not satisfied with the taste.

"There's nothing inherently wrong with Rough Diamond," he continued. "Individually, they're splendidly competent musicians with unblemished track records."

THE FAULT, Coleman believed, lay in two significant areas. Rough Diamond's self-penned material offered "nothing new or magical," with a mere two of the album's selections – opener 'Rock And Roll' and 'Scared' – boding well for the band's future. He was also left unimpressed by Byron's stage presence, claiming the singer appeared uncomfortable onstage and sang "with more technique than conviction."

The writer elaborated: "A band touted as special must surely be able to boast a singer with some magnetism, and although Byron looks good, he can't expect to whip through every singer's cliché in the book and get away with adding nothing to it."

FOR ALL of their deficiencies, though, Coleman was willing to consider the possibility that Rough Diamond would improve with more stage experience together, describing the debut show as "uneventful" and not "negative." Perhaps most importantly of all he noted: "The crowd loved it."

ROCK CANDY SAYS...

ROUGH DIAMOND DIDN'T GET very far. After this Marquee gig the band flew to America, where shows would prove hit and miss. They played some concerts with Peter Frampton, but more often than not they performed in clubs. David Byron in particular wasn't happy to be playing shows that were much smaller than those he'd been used to with Uriah Heep.

Byron, who was once described by Heep's Mick Box as a "proud peacock of a man," began to cause concern with his new bandmates because of his ostentatious outfits. At a meeting during which it was suggested that he should try to blend in with the other band members, the singer stood up and told the room: "The Byron does *not* wear jeans!" But guess what he was wearing at the next show?

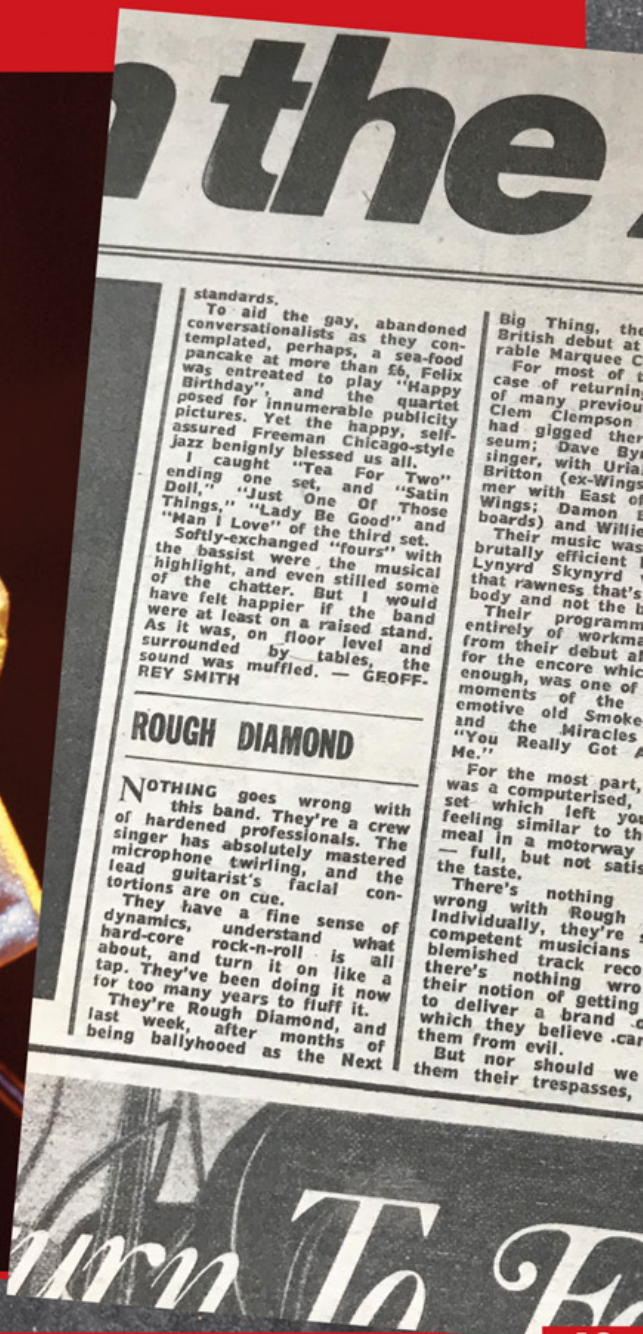
PRESSURE GREW as money from the band's advance from Island Records began to run out and their album failed to take off. When Rough Diamond returned from their US tour to discover *Melody Maker* journalist Allan Jones had labelled them "a group of rock'n'roll losers," bassist Bath wrote an indignant response listing each member's achievements and pointing out: "I am not trying to say we are great or even good, but it is difficult to understand how you can be declared a loser when you have never done anything but win."

All the same, the writing was on the wall for Rough Diamond. The band sacked their manager, which led to Island Records cancelling their contract. Byron had been chewing over the idea of resigning when the group made the decision for him. Rough Diamond changed their name to Champion, signed to Epic Records and hired a new singer, Garry Bell. However, they soon ran into many of the same problems.

FOR BYRON, sacked for the second time in a little more than a year, the Rough Diamond experience would prove an unwelcome catalyst. The man who couldn't live without being onstage soon realised that his popularity was in sharp decline. After an equally frustrating time alongside guitarist Robin George in The Byron Band, in 1981 David rebuffed an approach to rejoin Heep for would become the following year's album, 'Abominog'. Living like a recluse, David Byron succumbed to alcohol-related complications at his home in Berkshire on 28 February 1985 at the age of just 38. Thankfully, Clem Clempson and Geoff Britton are both still with us.

Rough Diamond frontman David Byron: "The Byron does *not* wear jeans!"

Photo: Getty Images/Fin Costello/Redferns



standards.
To aid the gay, abandoned conversationalists as they contemplated, perhaps, a sea-food pancake at more than £6, Felix was entreated to play "Happy Birthday", and the quartet posed for innumerable publicity pictures. Yet the happy, self-assured Freeman Chicago-style jazz benignly blessed us all.
I caught "Tea For Two" ending one set, and "Satin Doll," "Just One Of Those Things," "Lady Be Good" and "Man I Love" of the third set.
Softly-exchanged "fours" with the bassist were the musical highlight, and even stilled some of the chatter. But I would have felt happier if the band were at least on a raised stand. As it was, on floor level and surrounded by tables, the sound was muffled. — GEOFFREY SMITH

ROUGH DIAMOND

NOTHING goes wrong with this band. They're a crew of hardened professionals. The singer has absolutely mastered microphone twirling, and the lead guitarist's facial contortions are on cue.
They have a fine sense of dynamics, understand what hard-core rock-n-roll is all about, and turn it on like a tap. They've been doing it now for too many years to fluff it.
They're Rough Diamond, and last week, after months of being ballyhooed as the Next

Big Thing, the British debut at rable Marquee C
For most of case of returnin of many previou Clem Clempson had gigged ther seum; Dave By singer, with Uria Britton (ex-Wings mer with East o Wings; Damon boards) and Willie
Their music was brutally efficient Lynyrd Skynyrd that rawness that's body and not the
Their programm entirely of workma from their debut a for the encore whic enough, was one of moments of the emotive old Smoke and the Miracles "You Really Got Me."
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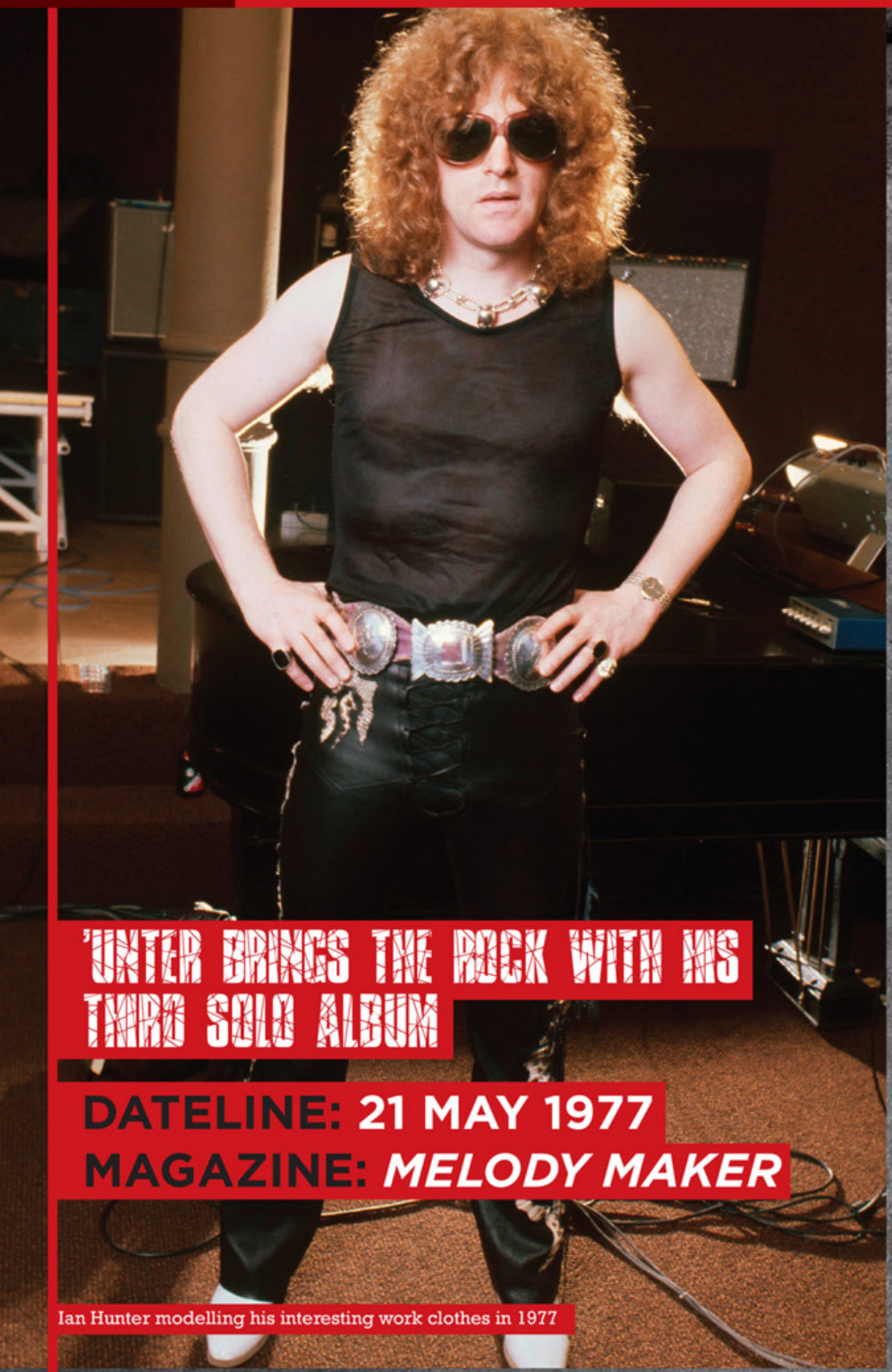
But nor should we them their trespasses,

STEP BACK IN TIME



Ian Hunter modelling his interesting work clothes in 1977

'UNTER BRINGS THE ROCK WITH HIS THIRD SOLO ALBUM

DATELINE: 21 MAY 1977
MAGAZINE: *MELODY MAKER*

IAN HUNTER'S CAREER WAS moving fast at this point in time. The singer had left Mott The Hoople in December 1974, but by early '77 was already on the verge of releasing a third solo album, 'Overnight Angels'. Hunter had also split with guitar-slinging sidekick Mick Ronson after his eponymous first solo album, apparently wanting nothing more to do with Mick's manager, Tony DeFries. The guitarist joined Bob Dylan's band instead.

ALTHOUGH HUNTER'S solo debut had delivered a hit, 'Once Bitten Twice Shy' (later covered by US rockers Great White), and had been warmly received by the critics, Ian took some chances with its follow-up. Unveiled in '76, 'All American Alien Boy' was a more low-key affair that featured a keyboard player, Chris Stainton, as a counterweight for the departed Ronson. The presence of bass player Jaco Pastorius lent proceedings a jazzy feel.

Queen producer Roy Thomas Baker was booked for third album, 'Overnight Angels', which was recorded in London and Canada. Hunter also hired Earl Slick who, like Ronson, had made his name playing guitar for David Bowie.

REVIEWING THE album as AJ, *Melody Maker*'s Allan Jones appreciated Hunter's intentions. "It sounds as if Ian has been listening to ancient Mott The Hoople recordings," he wrote. "I imagine that after the commercially disappointing, if artistically successful 'All American Alien Boy', Hunter felt that its emotional honesty should give way to the more colourful and extrovert style pursued by the original Mott. The imperative, after all, is to shift as many units as possible. So Hunter's all out for commercial success."

Beside the appointments of Baker and Slick, Hunter had "composed a batch of songs that attempt to recapture the razzle-dazzle mood associated with his former band, balanced inevitably against a clutch of those dreadfully sentimental ballads with which he's infatuated."

JONES VIEWED the contribution of Slick, "whose rabid, technoflash guitar is smeared all over 'Overnight Angels'," as offensive to the ears, dismissing the album as "excessive, overwrought and monumentally grotesque."

Slated as "overbearing", Baker's production was equally vilified. And the review added: "Too often the attempts of Hunter, Baker and the musicians to invest the slight songs with significance fall completely flat and result in a horrendous cacophony."

Keyboardist Peter Oxendale was "unsuccessfully attempting to replicate Roy Bittan's contribution to 'Station To Station'," while percussion parts "combine to swamp the proceedings in an undignified and bombastic din."

IF HE didn't like the way the tunes were presented, Jones didn't much care for songs like '(Miss) Silver Dime', 'Justice Of The Peace' and 'The Ballad Of Little Star' either. Jones dismissed the latter as "a typical Hunter loser's lament with what sounds like a gang of Volga boatmen on back-up vocals." Even the album's acknowledged highlight, 'To Love A Woman', was damned with faint praise.

"This album may revive the author's fading commercial fortunes," the reviewer concluded through gritted teeth. "But this time around Hunter's fabled 'six-string razor' is an impotent weapon."

Photo: Getty Images/Michael Putland

ROCK CANDY SAYS...

THE *MAKER*'S VERDICT ON 'Overnight Angels' was certainly scathing, but would Hunter's album become a commercial success? The answer was a resounding 'no'. 'Ian Hunter' and 'All American Alien Boy' were both Top 30 records in the UK. But Hunter's career was on the slide in the US. 'Ian Hunter' had skimmed the Top 50, but '...Alien Boy' had scarcely made the Top 200, peaking at 177.

Yet what happened next must have taken even Ian Hunter by surprise.

As Hunter parted company with his manager, Fred Heller, the US arm of his record company, Columbia, decided not to release 'Overnight Angels' at all. Furthermore, they said they wouldn't do so until Hunter hired new representation and had a tour booked. Hunter's response was to sign a new deal with Chrysalis for his next record, the career-reviving 'You're Never Alone With A Schizophrenic', crafted alongside Mick Ronson once more.

IN THOSE pre-Internet days, 'Overnight Angels' was then sold into America as an import, piggybacking on the success of '...Schizophrenic'. Over the long haul 'Overnight Angels' has become a 'cult' album, but it meant very little in commercial terms at the time of its release. Reviews like the one in *Melody Maker* clearly didn't help.

"Earl Slick was good to work with, but he needed to be told what to play," Hunter told me back in 2005, adding: "As an album, 'Overnight Angels' was one of my lesser achievements. That was my own fault."

PART OF Hunter's appeal, though, is that he doesn't take himself too seriously. It's always tough to guess his next move. Who would have predicted Mott The Hoople reunions in 2009, 2013 and again earlier this year without Mick Ralphs, Verden Allen and the late duo of Pete Overend Watts and Dale 'Buffin' Griffin.

"Boredom's always been my biggest enemy," Hunter admitted in that same 2005 interview. "I'll make a record one way and the next one has to be completely the opposite. And as much as I liked it when Mott started playing 20,000-seater arenas [during the 1970s], it made me irritable and precious."

IAN'S OWN opinion notwithstanding, however, hindsight has been kind to 'Overnight Angels'. In 2010, Def Leppard frontman and Hunter superfan Joe Elliott covered three of its tracks with his sideband the Down 'N' Outz on their 'My ReGeneration' album.

SNIPPETS – SHORT, SHARP SHOCKS FROM APRIL-MAY 1977

COVERDALE PREPARES FOR POST-PURPLE LIFE

DATELINE: 7 MAY 1977
MAGAZINE: *MELODY MAKER*

Following the previous year's dissolution of Deep Purple, vocalist David Coverdale described his new lead guitarist Micky Moody as "a genius" while setting the scene for a next record, 'White Snake'. "It's an album that doesn't really have a definite direction," he explained, "It's a transitional period for me as a part of Purple and as a solo guy."

PAT TRAVERS: "MORE ORIGINALITY AND VERSATILITY"

DATELINE: 2 APRIL 1977
MAGAZINE: *MELODY MAKER*

After Harry Doherty had been underwhelmed at a New Year's Eve gig by Pat Travers at London's Marquee Club, the Canadian guitarist and singer's second album, 'Makin' Magic', left the journalist revising his opinion. "Travers displays much more originality and versatility than his live set," Doherty surmised. "He totally undersells himself onstage by opting for the obvious."

THE TUBES STRUGGLE AWAY FROM THE STAGE

DATELINE: 21 MAY 1977
MAGAZINE: *MELODY MAKER*

Chris Welch felt that 'Now', the third album from the satirical US rockers, was their best so far, yet believed that for all of its improvements, it "failed to really capture the essence of The Tubes." In a seemingly prescient prediction of the following decade's MTV explosion, Welch reckoned the band's theatrical style would require a "video cassette" for full appreciation.

STEP BACK IN TIME

Heavy Metal Kids, clockwise from top: Ron Thomas (bass), John Sinclair (keyboards), Barry Paul (guitar), Gary Holton (vocals), Keith Boyce (drums)

"WE'RE GONNA BLOW PEOPLE'S BRAINS OUT!"

DATELINE: 21 MAY 1977

MAGAZINE: *MELODY MAKER*

IN A STORY HEADLINED 'THE Kids Are All Right', lead singer Gary Holton told *Melody Maker*'s Harry Doherty why he'd returned to Heavy Metal Kids.

Holton quit the Kids in September 1976, only agreeing to go back to the band a month before this *Maker* interview, after a spell working in his dad's pub. Holton had intended to form a new group called Stick Up with former Boxer members Tony Newman, Ollie Halsall and Keith Ellis, but soon found himself tied up in legal red tape. "It reached the stage where I didn't know why I was doing it anymore," he told Doherty. "Then when I left, it got even worse trying to form a new band."

GIVEN THAT an album titled 'Kitsch', produced by Mickie Most, was already in the can when Holton walked out, his stock wasn't exactly high with the rest of the group. "There'd been a lot of friction before I left," he admitted. "I was totally concerned about myself and not the band."

Somehow, however, the two sides managed to patch up their differences. Even an idiot could see that the Kids' own needs matched Holton's. And in 'Kitsch' the band had an album to be proud of.

"We've got a direction now," Gary said. "We're a fun band, a giggle and booze band. I'd love to be a street punk, but I'm not really."

THIS WAS perhaps a strange statement given that the Kids' live set included a freshly written song called 'New Wave', inspired by the punk movement. "It's not a negative reaction [to those bands]," Holton insisted. "We wanted to write a story about the things that the mums and dads would say about it. It's not anti-new wave, no way. Actually, I think the whole punk scene is the healthiest thing that's happened for years. It doesn't really matter whether the music is good or bad. I've never heard Johnny Rotten sing, but I love 'im."

For the record, Rotten had already attended an HMK gig at the Speakeasy in London, theatrically pronouncing "boring, boring, boring" to anyone within earshot. At a later meeting he would pin a huge gold safety pin on Gary Holton's lapel, pat his cheek and proclaim: 'You've been ripped off, Holton. How does it feel?'"

NOTWITHSTANDING MICKIE Most's wonderful spit-and-polish job on the band's sound, the Heavy Metal Kids were well placed to capitalise on Britain's latest craze. In fact, since 'Kitsch' the band had become grittier still with the departure of keyboardist John Sinclair and the appointment of a second guitarist, the American slide player Jay Williams. Doherty believed that "the new man gives the band a much meatier sound."

"Maybe the lay-off did us some good," said Holton. "For four bloody years we worked really hard. It was getting to the stage where we were the best support band in the world, but now we're gonna blow people's brains out. This show will be so dynamic."

Photo: Getty Images/Michael Putland

ROCK CANDY SAYS...

FOR A WHILE IT seemed Holton's prediction would come true. 'Kitsch' generated some glowing reviews and even a spot on *Top Of The Pops* with 'She's No Angel'. But Holton had always been something of a loose canon. He'd already been sacked once, in July of 1976, when the Heavy Metal Kids dumped him in Spain during a tour with Uriah Heep. Spookily, that was on the same night the headliners sacked their singer, David Byron. "Heep considered having Gary as their singer and I even asked David Byron to join HMK," drummer Keith Boyce later revealed.

But within months of the *Maker* story appearing, Holton was up to his old tricks, missing rehearsals and behaving bizarrely. With relations getting more and more strained, HMK fizzled out at the end of '77.

SINCE THEN a disparate array of stars such as Def Leppard, Keith Richards, Motörhead and even Lady Gaga, has sung the praises of Heavy Metal Kids.

However, Holton – who found success as an actor in the TV series *Auf Weidersehen, Pet* – would prove almost impossible to replace. Tragically, he died at the peak of his fame from an overdose of morphine combined with alcohol in October 1985, aged just 32.

IN 2003, following what the band termed "a 26-year tea-break," keyboardist Danny Peyronel became the

Heavy Metal Kids frontman for a criminally underrated record called 'Hit The Right Button'. Mega-fan Phil Lewis of L.A. Guns/Girl fame helped out for a few shows in 2011 and there was even a stint with John Altman, AKA Nasty Nick Cotton from TV soap opera *EastEnders*, at the microphone.

All these years later, an HMK line-up featuring Boyce and fellow stalwart Cosmo on guitar, Justin McConville (lead vocals, guitar) and PJ Phillips (bass) continues to perform live. Top marks for persistence, then.

SNIPPETS – SHORT, SHARP SHOCKS FROM APRIL-MAY 1977

BAD CO. ANNOUNCE EARL'S COURT GIG

DATELINE: 28 MAY 1977
MAGAZINE: *MELODY MAKER*

Out of the UK limelight since an appearance at Olympia's Great British Music Festival the previous year, Bad Company unveiled a concert at London's Earl's Court to promote the 'Burnin' Sky' album. The band would fly back from America especially for the performance and return to the States immediately afterwards. Tickets cost between £1.50 and £3.50.

CHEAP TRICK DELIVER 'HEAVEN TONIGHT'

DATELINE: 28 MAY 1977
MAGAZINE: *MELODY MAKER*

Ian Birch was getting tired of flying the banner for a band that was huge in Japan and meant nothing elsewhere at the time. Of Cheap Trick's third studio album, 'Heaven Tonight', he wrote: "Every track is fiercely cast and full of fascinating frills, built around simplicity itself. 'Surrender', the single, is glorious teenarama."

QUO-ON-ON-ON, OH NO!

DATELINE: 2 APRIL 1977
MAGAZINE: *MELODY MAKER*

As a Status Quo fan who didn't like live albums, Harry Doherty was left in a quandary by the band's double set, 'Live', especially as he'd criticised one of the Glasgow gigs at which it was recorded. However, for those who loved Quo and live albums, the outcome was certain to "tear your bedroom apart, having grabbed the nearest cricket bat."

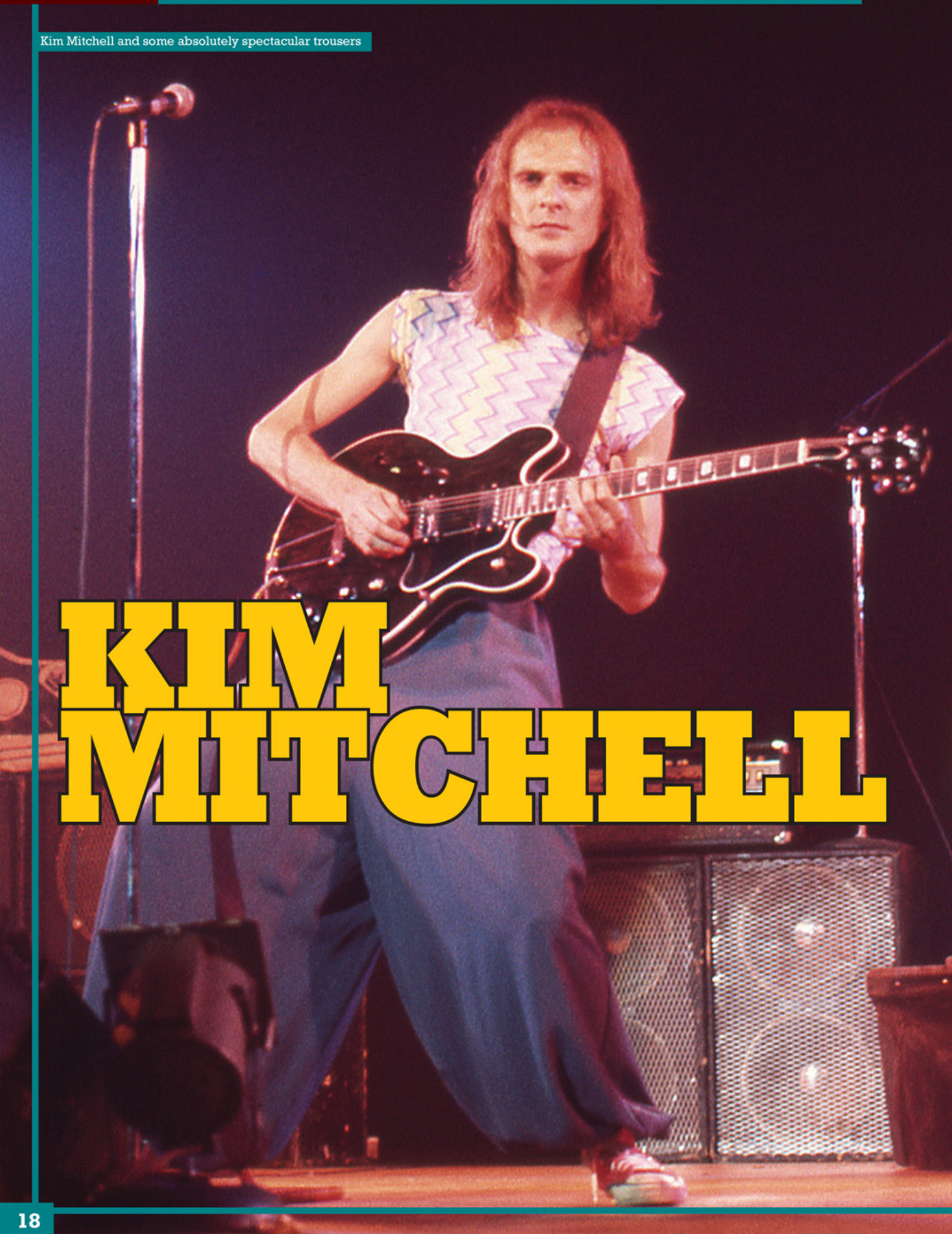
SAHB WITHOUT ALEX: "A DISAPPOINTMENT"

DATELINE: 16 APRIL 1977
MAGAZINE: *MELODY MAKER*

With a poor sound and a less-than-full auditorium at the Rainbow in London, Brian Harrigan didn't rate the survival chances of the leaderless Harvey Band. While earlier dates on the tour had gone better, in the capital Harrigan felt the group "seemed to be looking at each other and wondering who was going to fill Alex's shoes."

PERSON OF INTEREST

ROCK CANDY SALUTES THE ROCK STARS WHO DID THINGS DIFFERENTLY...



Kim Mitchell and some absolutely spectacular trousers

KIM MITCHELL

BORN IN THE CANADIAN city of Sarnia, Ontario on 10 July 1952, singer and guitarist Kim Mitchell got the musical bug early. By the age of 11 he was featuring in his first band, The Gladiators.

"I was playing bass on a six string guitar," he recalls. "Which I guess means I wasn't playing bass at all."

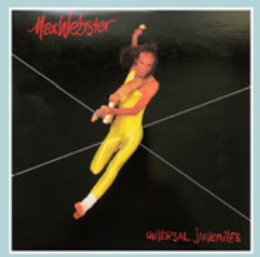
A string of further bands would follow – The Quotations, The Grass Company, Big Al's Band and them Zooom, which saw him relocating to Toronto at the age of 17.

"I kinda wanted to finish school," he recalls. "I had aspirations to be a dentist, make something of my life. But then I figured I could always go back to school."

After that came a year on the Greek island of Rhodes, backing a Greek-Canadian wannabe Tom Jones, pounding out 'What's New Pussycat' alongside the rest of Jones's catalogue. Fatefully, a Toronto friend named Paul Woods came out to visit, better known to fans as Pye Dubois and famously to critics as "a man who generates a jumble of words which occasionally rhyme." The pair began to write songs together and the seeds of Max Webster were sown.

"Writing with him was an odd process, but fun," says Kim. "He didn't understand what a chorus was, there wasn't the rhythm you want in a lyric and he didn't grasp the format of a song. But in the end I think that was one of the things that people liked about Max Webster, being more experimental and free. Pye never really told a story. He created images with language. To this day I still have no idea what 'Toronto Tontos' is actually about..."

The classic Max Webster line-up. L-R: Terry Watkinson (keyboards and vocals), Kim Mitchell (guitar and lead vocals), Mike Tilka (bass and vocals), Gary McCracken (drums and percussion)



BACK IN Toronto in 1973 Max Webster came together, the name coming from bassist Mike Tilka's previous band Family At Mac's (which perhaps merits an explanation of its own) and their song 'Webster'. Right from the start the members had no interest at all in being a conventional rock band (Pye never actually joined the group.)

"I was a fan of people who did something *different* – Captain Beefheart and Frank Zappa, for a couple of examples. Not being weird just to be weird, but wanting to have our music grow into something that was our own and you'd know right away you were hearing Max Webster," explains Kim.

But weirdness was definitely in the frame. Witness the band's wacky look, which completely overturned the conventional wisdom of 'image'.

"I found a really bizarre clothing store to shop in," explains Mitchell, "and just kept going back. We wanted to be different in every way. Looking back it's completely embarrassing, but it served its purpose."

DESPITE, AND in some ways because of, their unconventionality Max Webster would enjoy substantial success in Canada, but that only served to fuel their label's desire for them to get bigger. That meant America. That meant dialling back almost everything Max stood for. The band continued to make great records because they were a great band, but the business machinations took their toll on Mitchell, who eventually threw up his hands and quit in 1981. A solo career would follow where Mitchell would substantially outsell Max Webster and become a household name in Canada. The partnership with Pye Dubois continued, yielding eight albums and an EP – the biggest, 1986's 'Shakin' Like A Human Being' scoring triple platinum – and multiple hit singles including 1984's 'Go For Soda' (that was co-opted by Mothers Against Drunk Drivers in America) and 'Patio Lanterns'.

ALONG WITH most of our heroes, Mitchell's star would wane in the new millennium, but in 2004 Toronto's leading rock station Q107 would go from playing Kim's music to employing him as a DJ for the primetime afternoon drive show. He played classic rock, regaled listeners with a lifetime of stories and interviewed artists from an artist's perspective. As he told Canadian writer Bonita Patoine, "I'd just wanted to do a little Sunday evening thing. They thought it was a good idea, but it became something much bigger. Radio's fun, although I didn't realise the learning curve. There's a definite craft to delivering a good show."

Mitchell's show would continue for 11 years before a corporate purge under new management would see many of the station's DJs removed from the schedule. A few months later Kim was hit by a heart attack.

As he told *Music Life* magazine, "I woke up in the middle of the night with a pain in my neck. I'd put my back out years ago and thought maybe it was something similar, and I was on my way to the nearest hospital when I felt a twinge in my chest. The pain started getting worse and worse and after they did an EKG [electrocardiogram test] the doctor said, 'You're having a heart attack'. One of the main veins was 100% blocked, so they put a stent in. For a while I thought it was the end and I became at peace with it. Then the doctor said, 'We've found the problem and you're going to start feeling better in a couple of minutes.' I just started to bawl right there in the surgery."

THANKFULLY IT wasn't the end, and Kim Mitchell survived to rock another day. A hefty eight-disc Max Webster retrospective box set titled 'The Party' was released last year, and the 66 year old is back on the road, working material both old and new as a new studio album slowly takes shape. We almost lost one of rock's most original performers, so it feels an appropriate time to celebrate someone who really did go out of his way to do things completely differently.

Words: Paul Suter.

CLASSIC ALBUM SLEEVE

Saga performing live in Hamburg, Germany, June 1980. L-R: Ian Crichton (guitar), Michael Sadler (vocals and keyboards), Steve Negus (drums), Jim Crichton (bass), Jim Gilmour (keyboards)

SAGA
'IMAGES AT TWILIGHT'
DATELINE: MAY 1979

Illustrator **Tony Roberts** reveals how he came up with a truly stunning cover for the Canadian pomp/prog rockers...

"IN EARLY 1979 I was approached by Polydor Records via a London agency that was representing me at the time called Young Artists. The label asked if I'd be interested in a possible commission to produce a piece of artwork for Saga's next release, 'Images At Twilight'.

"After leaving college with a degree in fine art in the early '70s, my interest in Surrealism had led to me mainly working on illustrating covers for hundreds of science fiction book jackets. Initially I did these for UK publishing companies, but as many of these images were also used on editions that were published worldwide, this inevitably led to my work being exposed in North America. And that meant I began to get more and more commissions from US publishers, advertising companies and the like.

"AROUND ABOUT this time there was a huge resurgence of interest in all things science fiction, especially books and films. Suddenly there was a huge demand for sci-fi imagery from artists and illustrators, especially from people like me, people who could produce cool, sharp, airbrushed work. For some reason we all seemed to be based in the UK.

"I'm not too sure how my work came to the attention of Polydor, but once I'd expressed an interest in producing something for the Saga sleeve they sent me the band's first album from the previous year [1978's 'Saga'], together with a very loose brief requesting that I still use the first cover's flying creature.

"I admit that I was unfamiliar with Saga's music, but since I was at college I'd been into UK prog rock bands like Cream, Led Zeppelin and The Nice. I'd seen all those bands play live.

"AFTER ALL this time I can't honestly remember if the idea of including a devastated New York skyscape came from the Polydor art department or from me, but I'd already used several post-apocalypse elements in my previous book cover work, and this may have been why I decided to go with that approach.

"I'd previously collaborated with Oscar-winning director Roger Christian, working as a concept artist on several speculative movie projects, so I knew I wanted the cover to have a very filmic, wide-angle look.

"I PRODUCED a pencil rough of the idea, which was originally supposed to be a wraparound cover. Once the art director had approved the sketch I got down to painting the artwork. I did it a bit larger than the sleeve size at 70cm x 44cm on prepared art board. I painted in acrylics, building up layers of colours to produce both depth and intensity.

"THE ARTWORK was immediately approved and, I presume, was well liked, because the following year I was asked to do Saga's next album, 'Silent Knight'. Again this featured the robotic flying creature, but it was now cocooned in the iconic Einstein Tower, which I relocated from Potsdam in Germany to deep space.

"From memory, both these original artworks were later sold to Saga fans and collectors in Europe.

"OVER THE years I've had numerous enquiries and questions about these two pieces. People always seem to be disappointed to learn that I never met the band and never saw them live."

Interview by Howard Johnson. Photo: Getty Images/Ullstein Bild/Jazz Archiv

"I liked the idea of expanding and adding to the sense of jeopardy implied by the single, locust-like creature from the band's previous album cover. I thought this could be done by introducing a swarm of them – an invasion by a flying hoard."

"By setting the invasion at twilight I could significantly amplify the drama of the image, while also tying it more closely to the album title. Though seemingly violent, I also wanted the image to have a certain lyricism and poetry."

"I made the future buildings spherical and linked together as a counterpoint to the familiar, isolated, rectangular structures of New York. I guess this was a rather naive metaphor for what I hoped might be a more inter-connected society in the future. Painted some 32 years before 9/11 and showing the Twin Towers still standing in an indeterminate future, the cover now has a tragic resonance that I really couldn't have predicted."

"I produced these dark streaks of cloud because I thought they would help direct the eye to the main action. I also tried for the same effect with the smoke trails."

"I deliberately made the colours warm and contrasty, with the sun flaring like an optical effect in a camera lens. I produced this effect with an airbrush. At the time I produced all my work using a combination of brush and airbrush."

"I thought it would be interesting to show the wrecked, futuristic New York City in silhouette, starkly dark and devastated. I thought it turned out well. I used my favourite skyscraper – the Chrysler Building – as the central beast's plucked fruit."

"Actually placing the light source in a painting – in this case the sun – presents certain problems, which is why artists often avoid doing it. Everything in front of the light source falls into shadow, but here this gave me the opportunity to paint some interesting effects on the water, as well as some reflections on the main creature's metallic carapace."

SAGA – 'IMAGES AT TWILIGHT'

Released: May 1979. Album length: 37.55. Produced by Paul Gross. Engineered by Alan Thorne and Mick Walsh. Recorded between 1977 and 1979 at Phase One Studios, Toronto, Canada.

1. It's Time (Chapter Three) (4.01) – *Jim Crichton, Ian Crichton, Greg Chadd, Steve Negus, Michael Sadler*
2. See Them Smile (3:25) – *Jim Crichton*
3. Slow Motion (3:55) – *Michael Sadler, Jim Crichton*
4. You're Not Alone (5:22) *Jim Crichton, Ian Crichton, Steve Negus, Peter Rochon*
5. Take It Or Leave It (3:58) – *Michael Sadler, Jim Crichton*
6. Images (Chapter One) (6:31) – *Jim Crichton, Michael Sadler*
7. Hot To Cold (5:02) – *Michael Sadler, Peter Rochon*
8. Mouse In A Maze (5.41) – *Jim Crichton, Steve Negus, Peter Rochon*

LINE UP:
Michael Sadler – lead vocals, keyboards, Moog synthesizer, bass guitar on 'It's Time'
Ian Crichton – electric and acoustic guitars
Greg Chadd – keyboards, backing vocals, Moog synthesizer, vocoder effects
Jim Crichton – bass guitar, Moog synthesizer
Steve Negus – drums, percussion

YOU COULDN'T MAKE IT UP!

INSANE TALES FROM THE ANNALS OF ROCK

Kip Winger in his full hair metal pomp. "They just started taking shots at me."

"Kip Winger? He's got a problem with me?" Metallica drummer Lars Ulrich reacts to unexpected news back in '92

WINGER HAVE BEEF WITH METALLICA

WHEN METALLICA RELEASED A VIDEO FEATURING AN OBVIOUS DIG AT HAIR METAL POSTER BOY KIP WINGER, IT STARTED ONE OF THE MOST UNEXPECTED FEUDS IN ROCK HISTORY...

DATELINE: APRIL 1992

FEUDS ARE FUNNY. UNLESS you happen to be caught in the middle of one, that is. So when '80s hair metal guy Kip Winger found himself at the centre of a spat with thrash metal gods Metallica, the frontman from Denver had what can only be called a sense of humour failure.

When Metallica released 'Nothing Else Matters' – the third single from their phenomenally successful fifth studio album, 'Metallica' – back in 1992, drummer Lars Ulrich was happy to feature in the promo video around the two-minute 55 mark, standing at a dartboard covered by a pin-up poster of Kip Winger. Ulrich grins at the camera in a slightly smug manner as he removes his arrows. The point is hard to ignore. Metallica wanted the world to know that they saw Winger as the enemy.

JUST BEFORE the grunge explosion that would take his band down, Kip Winger was the poster boy for a movement that unwittingly stood on the precipice of extinction. *Kerrang!* magazine may have nicknamed Kip 'the blow-dried Bee Gee', but there was no denying the popularity of Winger the band, whose two albums had both gone platinum in the United States.

Ulrich could have chosen other pretty boy targets to mock in his video – Warrant, Cinderella, Slaughter, Nelson, and Danger Danger all spring to mind. But in some ways Winger were sitting ducks. Their logo featured on a T-shirt worn by Stewart, the nerdy neighbour of the MTV cartoon characters *Beavis and Butt-Head*, adding to the perception that Kip was at the forefront of a metal style and scene that was barely worthy of the name. It was also rumoured that Winger was an egomaniac who needed taking down a peg or two. Others felt it was dubious at worst, cheesy at best, that Winger's second hit, 'Seventeen', was brazenly about an underage girl.

THERE WAS, however, a certain irony in the fact that Metallica chose the video for 'Nothing Else Matters' to air their ire about Winger. After years leading the heavy metal underground, Metallica were suddenly riding the wave of mainstream commercial success with what had quickly become known as 'The Black Album'. Producer Bob Rock had added an undeniable commercial sheen to its first two singles, 'Enter Sandman' and 'The Unforgiven'. But nonetheless, both songs still retained tangible connections to the band's thrash metal roots.

By contrast, 'Nothing Else Matters' was a full-blown power ballad. Metallica had experimented with light

and shade before, but this really was alien territory. With the Winger vignette, and with Ulrich smirking knowingly, were the creators of 'Whiplash' and 'Leper Messiah' seeking to deflect attention from having strayed so far from home? Who knows? But in later years Kip Winger would accuse Metallica of "bullying" his band and "acting like children."

"I never had anything against the guy," he told *Metal Sludge* website when speaking about Ulrich. "In fact, when I first heard 'The Black Album' I thought it was a really cool record... and then they just started taking shots at me, for whatever reason. But it's okay, Lars isn't really that talented. He's got a lot of f*cking money, though, so I'm sure he's happy."

Darts at dawn. It's Ulrich v Winger!

KIP NEVER got to ask why his band were singled out. "I've never met Metallica," he told another interviewer. "I tried to say something to Lars at a show one time, but he had his bodyguard hold me back. It was a long time ago. I don't get it, dude. I don't understand it at all."

The bassist/vocalist was all too aware that Winger the band featured some of the most gifted musicians of the hair metal scene. He once half-joked: "Our drummer, Rod Morgenstein, could out-drum Ulrich with one hand tied behind his back."

Kip was far from alone in slating Metallica's musical chops. Not too long ago, in an interview with radio show *Decades Of Distortion*, Winger guitarist Reb Beach – also a member of the current Whitesnake – reacted indignantly to comparisons between his own technique and that of Metallica guitarist Kirk Hammett, bridling: "I don't know the guy, but he's one of the worst guitar players I've heard in my life. I've never heard a solo [of his] that was any good; they're terrible and out of tune. His vibrato, oh my God... it's like he's a beginner."

Kip was open-minded enough to admit, "Metallica had some good stuff in the old days," though the comment came with a disclaimer: "Now they're just musically bankrupt, in it for the T-shirt sales and the ticket count. Metallica fans will probably read this and go, 'Aw, you're an asshole. Who the f*ck are you?' I'm just saying that I know good music."

Winger and Beach were so irritated by Metallica's perceived slight that they even recorded a song, 'Hell To Pay', where they vented in a way that definitely couldn't be misconstrued. The song's lyrics included Metallica track titles, featuring lines like: "*It's sad but true, you tread on me/As if nothing else matters.*" The track was included as a bonus on the Japanese version of Winger's 1993 album 'Pull'.

NOW, 26 years later and with all the protagonists in middle age, Metallica probably regret baiting Winger in that 'Nothing Else Matters' video. Interestingly, though, neither side wanted to talk about the subject when we invited them to.

"I can certainly see why the incident happened," Kip told me in a previous conversation. "I had a background in ballet and theatre and I was quite flamboyant back then. With Winger I was intentionally trying to put a muso-type band around a David Lee Roth or Paul Stanley-style frontman, and nobody really saw that.

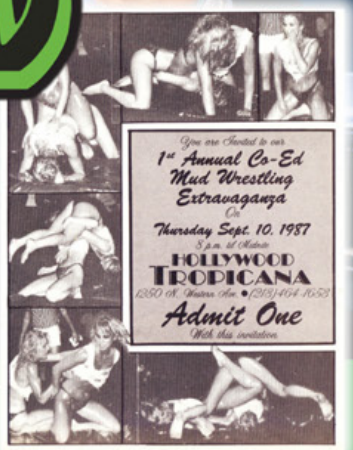
"However, I got a Grammy recommendation when I put out my classical record [2016's 'Winger: Conversations With Nijinsky'], and to me that sets things straight."

Words by Dave Ling. Cartoon by Christophe Sénégas. Photos: Getty Images/Ebet Roberts/Redferns; Getty Images/Mick Hutson/Redferns

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS

BIZARRE MEETINGS WITH BIZARRE ROCK STARS...

It may have been a mud-wrestling emporium, but the dress code at Hollywood Tropicana was particularly strict



Malcolm Dome (barely) remembers a booze-sodden 1987 evening with **Poison** where he ended up mud wrestling in his undies!

FIRST, A CONFESSION. FOR reasons that will become obvious, some of what follows isn't based entirely on my own memory of events, but on what I was subsequently told by members of the band. Anyway, on with the madness...

Tropicana time! Malcolm Dome just out of shot...

IN LATE 1987, hugely successful glam rockers Poison were in LA's Conway Studios working on their second album, 'Open Up And Say... Ahh!' I was out in LA just for the hell of it and was invited to the studio to hear how things were progressing. Producer Tom Werman played me a few tracks through the studio's spectacular sound system, and I was duly impressed. By way of celebration, Poison bassist Bobby Dall told me the band were going to head off to Hollywood Tropicana, a renowned mud-wrestling emporium. "And we're gonna bid you in!" he added enigmatically. I had no clue what he meant, but was keen to find out.

TOGETHER WITH the band and tour manager Scotti Ross, I headed over to the Tropicana. We stood at the bar for a while and, inevitably, several rounds of shots were bought. It was Jack Daniel's all the way – and I wasn't allowed to pay for any of it!

Lots of nubile young ladies were stripped for action and the mud wrestling was taking place in the middle of the room. I can definitely remember slamming a $100 bill down on the bar and insisting on buying the next round of shots. I can also recall Poison singer Bret Michaels saying, "Right, your turn to be bid in!" But that's where things get very blurry...

THE NEXT day the band told me exactly what had happened. Being 'bid in' means that various gentlemen in the audience offer money to be able to get in the ring and wrestle with one of the ladies. Well, Poison paid for me to have a go – and they claimed I was a natural. Stripped down to my underpants, in I dived, apparently demanding the right to wrestle with not just one, but *several* girls!

But that wasn't the end of my antics. Much to the amusement of the band, I then decided the compere for the night was rubbish, and with huge encouragement from everyone in the place I grabbed the microphone and took over the role of MC – still only wearing my undies!

The four members of Poison insist I was hilarious, but the owners of the Tropicana were less than delighted, and tried to get the bouncers to throw me out a few times. The gallant band members bribed the security to let me stay, because they thought the whole thing was just *sooo* entertaining.

IT WAS only the following day that I was made aware of what had gone down. The band said they managed to get me to a shower to clean me up, before I demanded to go to the famous Rainbow Bar for yet more drinking. That, however, is a separate tale, and I think best left for another time!

This was in the era before phone cameras, of course, so sadly there's no visual evidence of that bonkers night. But maybe on reflection that's a good thing, for the sake of my dignity if nothing else!

Photos: Getty Images/Bettmann; Getty Images/George Rose

DATELINE: 25 MARCH 1973, LONDON, ENGLAND

Noddy Holder and the top hat that inspired Kim

"IT WAS SO JOYOUS!"

GIRLSCHOOL'S KIM MCAULIFFE TAKES US BACK TO 1973 AND THE DAY WHEN **SLADE** PLAYED TO A MASSIVE 20,000 LONDONERS IN JUST ONE DAY...

Kim feelz the noize

"MY FIRST GIG WAS Slade at the old Empire Pool [later rebranded Wembley Arena] in London. I thought it was around 1976, but when I checked I was shocked to find the gig actually took place on 25 March 1973, which means I was still just 13 at the time! It was a *New Musical Express* Poll Winners Show, which is amazing in itself. The idea that a magazine that ended up so anti-rock would celebrate Slade! Wow!

"I LIVED next door to my cousin Lee, who was about a year older than me, and he was the one who got the tickets, which cost the huge sum of £1! There were actually two Slade gigs that day. The band first announced an evening performance and that show sold out really fast. People forget now just how huge Slade were back then! So they added a second show in the afternoon and I'm sure that's the performance Lee and I went to. There's no way our parents would have allowed the two of us to be out at Wembley in North London in the evening, miles from our home in the South – especially when we were so young!

"A BIG part of the excitement for me was getting ready for the show beforehand. I dressed up in glam gear, or the closest I could get to it. I remember that I wore a tall hat covered in silver foil in homage to Slade frontman Noddy Holder, who often wore a shiny topper himself! My mum helped me to make it, sticking bits of foil on the hat, which looked great – or at least I thought it looked great at the time!

"THE GIG itself was incredible. It wasn't just that Slade played so well, but the whole atmosphere was fantastic. It was so joyous. Everyone who was there seemed to have a huge smile on their face. That made a big impression on me, and looking back now I think that was the moment when I decided I wanted to get up on a stage and play in a band myself. I can't remember exactly what songs Slade played that night, but I do remember that 'Cum On Feel The Noize' was their number one hit at that time and that they played the tune as an encore, which sent everybody crazy! I've since read that the band played to 20,000 people at those two shows. Can you believe it? 20,000 people in one single day in an indoor venue!

"TEN YEARS after seeing that amazing Slade show I ended up working with Noddy and [bassist] Jim Lea when they produced my band Girlschool's 'Play Dirty' album. It was really exciting for me to be working with my heroes and I couldn't wait to tell Jim about seeing Slade at Wembley all those years previously. The trouble is that every time I brought the subject up Jim just covered his ears. He really didn't want to talk about it. It only reminded him of how old he was, ha! But that show was the start of everything for me. I was eventually given one of my cousin Lee's hand-me-down guitars and that was it – I was totally hooked! I remember that I saw Deep Purple and Led Zeppelin shortly afterwards, but that afternoon with Slade was and still is a really special memory for me."

Interview by Malcolm Dome. Photos: Getty Images/ABC Photo Archives; Tony Mottram

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Real Bad Company

As legendary '70s rockers **Bad Company** struggled to adapt to the '80s, vocalist **Brian Howe** believes he helped the band find a way back to commercial success. So why doesn't he receive more credit for his time with the band? *Malcolm Dome* talks to the singer to find out why...

BAD COMPANY'S STATUS AS an iconic band is unquestionable. 'Feel Like Makin' Love', 'Can't Get Enough' and 'Good Lovin' Gone Bad' are all enduring staples of classic rock radio, and the combination of Paul Rodgers' soulful wail, Mick Ralphs' tough-yet-understated guitar style, and Simon Kirke's driving drumming make the band's early recordings instantly recognisable. But in heaping praise on the Bad Company legacy, we often forget there was an eight-year period between 1986 and 1994 when Bad Co. had considerable success – and Rodgers wasn't even in the band!

"It's as if my time with Bad Company has been airbrushed out of history," sighs Brian Howe, the man who replaced Rogers at the time. "Those guys live in a cocoon where it's permanently 1974, and they've purposefully removed anything I ever had to do with them. Am I bitter about it? Yes I am. But if they really want to completely obliterate memories of the role I played in Bad Company then they should return all the royalties I helped them earn during my time in the band. That would make sense, right?"

> "IT WAS A STUPID MOVE TO PUT OUT A BAD COMPANY ALBUM THAT WAS FULL OF KEYBOARDS. IT SENT OUT THE WRONG MESSAGE ABOUT WHAT WE WERE DOING AS A BAND. IF IT HAD BEEN A FRESH START WITH A DIFFERENT NAME, THEN EVERYTHING WOULD HAVE BEEN FINE."

HOWE'S WORK with Bad Company produced four studio releases and was the last time the legendary band enjoyed any major album success. But when the English vocalist first teamed up with guitarist Ralphs and drummer Kirke back in 1986, the idea wasn't to continue with Bad Company at all. Paul Rodgers had left in 1982 in the wake of the inconsistent 'Rough Diamonds' album and released a solo effort, 'Cut Loose', in October of 1983. Ralphs and Kirke, meanwhile, had worked together on the guitarist's 1984 solo album, 'Take This!', and were looking to start a new project.

"I was good friends with Mick Jones of Foreigner and he'd been keeping a close watch on my career," explains Howe, who was born in Portsmouth and had briefly been a member of NWOBHM outfit White Spirit. He'd been sending demos to Atlantic Records, who liked his voice, and had hooked the singer up with Ted Nugent for the American guitarist's 1984 album 'Penetrator'. Howe reckons he was paid peanuts for his work with Nugent, so was on the lookout for another gig. "Mick Jones knew that Simon and Mick were looking for a singer," he says. "So he put me in touch with them.

"The idea was for us to form a new band and I was to be an equal partner in the project," he explains. "The thing was, we didn't want to follow in the footsteps of Bad Company at all, but rather wanted to take the music in a fresh direction that was right for the time. We thought about various names for the band. Automatic was one we definitely discussed."

The trio brought in Steve Price on bass and former Uriah Heep keyboard player Greg Dechert. Armed with a deal from Atlantic Records, they went into the studio with producer Kevin Elson to record an album in 1986. Mick Jones oversaw the sessions as executive producer. But once the music had been recorded and completed, things took a rather unexpected turn.

"We still couldn't think of a good enough name," says Brian. "Then we got a call from Ahmet Ertegun and Doug Morris, the guys who ran Atlantic. They said that if we wanted to come up with a fresh name and carry on as a new band, then they'd give us $400,000 as the final part of the advance we were due. However, if we would agree to using the Bad Company name they'd give us $800,000! As soon as Mick Ralphs heard this figure he said, 'I'm in!' Simon quickly followed. I disagreed, but the band was a democracy and I was outvoted. I had to go along with what the other two decided."

THE ALBUM the band had recorded, titled 'Fame And Fortune', came out in October 1986. Yet despite appearing under the powerful Bad Company name ►

Photo: Iconic Pix/Joe Giron

Brian Howe performing onstage with Bad Company on the 'Dangerous Age' tour, April 1989. Note band-related belt

DARK DAYS

it wasn't a commercial success – the first Bad Company release not to make the Top 100 in America. The worst-selling Bad Co. album prior to 'Fame And Fortune' had been 1982's 'Rough Diamonds'. But it had still reached number 26 in the US chart, selling half a million copies. Howe says he knew immediately where the problem lay.

"It was a stupid move to put out a Bad Company album that was full of keyboards," he admits. "It sent out the wrong message about what we were doing as a band. If it had been a fresh start with a different name as we'd originally planned, then everything would have been fine. But we'd gone in the direction of reviving the old name, so we needed to do things differently.

"I can remember saying all this to Simon, and he really fought against my idea of dropping Greg Dechert so there would be fewer keyboards. They were friends, so Simon loyally stuck by him. In the end I just said to him, 'Look, do you want to carry on selling the low numbers we've just done with the current album? Or do you want to do a lot better?' In the end Simon reluctantly agreed to go along with my suggestion."

WITH THE pressure on for the band to produce a commercially successful album, Howe was aware that there were other things that needed to change too.

"I had a meeting in London with our manager, Bud Prager," he recalls. "Afterwards we were walking down the road in Central London and I told Bud that I badly needed a songwriting partner, otherwise we were going to end up with another 'Fame And Fortune' on our hands, and that would be disastrous. Bud came up with the idea of putting me together with [former Charlie guitarist and vocalist] Terry Thomas. Terry came down to my home in Portsmouth and we both started to feel our way, to see how we got along and whether we could work as a team. The first song we came up with was 'Dirty Boy' [which would end up on 1988's 'Dangerous Age' album] and we both quickly realised that there was a natural rapport between us.

"The original idea was that we'd write three or four songs together, but things went so well that we ended up doing 12 or 13! We took those songs to Mick and Simon and played them to them, expecting them to play us the stuff they'd been working on. To my astonishment they had absolutely nothing, but that didn't stop Mick from complaining that it wasn't fair that we'd done so much writing. He insisted that the new album had to feature a few of his songs. 'OK,' I said. 'That's fine by me. But

"Where are the songs, Mick?"

Photos: Iconic Pix/Joe Giron; Iconic Pix/Ray Palmer Archive

you haven't got anything!' Mick was thinking about the money you could make from publishing, but what could we do when he hadn't written anything at all?"

TERRY THOMAS ended up co-writing every song on 'Dangerous Age', as well as producing the album. His input had an immediate effect. Released in August of 1988, 'Dangerous Age' sold over half a million copies in the States, making it to number 58 in the US charts. The single 'Shake It Up' even grazed the singles charts, peaking at number 82.

"It was definitely a move in the right direction," says Howe. "I was determined to put Bad Company back on top, selling a lot of records and doing major arena tours. It became an obsession with me, but I'm not sure the others shared my passion. I was fresh and inexperienced – it was all new and exciting. Mick had already been through the mill with Mott The Hoople and the first incarnation of Bad Company. He'd had a lot of success, and when you've already done it before it can be very tough to push yourself to do it all over again."

Brian Howe photographed in London, 1986, already putting on the tin helmet ahead of potential Bad Company fallout

DESPITE THE fact that 'Dangerous Age' sent the band on an upward trajectory once more, relations in the band were strained. At the start of 1990 there were rumours of an attempt to oust Howe and replace him with Kansas singer Steve Walsh. For his part, Howe was ready to quit Bad Company for a solo career.

"By this time I'd really had enough of Mick and Simon," he admits. "I knew they wanted me out of the band, so I decided I'd leave and do a solo album. I'd already written and demoed the songs and Atlantic seemed to like the way it was all sounding.

"But then Derek Shulman, who was the A&R guy at Atlantic [Atco], came to see me. He told me bluntly that a Brian Howe solo album just wouldn't sell, but if the songs I had were used on the next Bad Company record, then it was guaranteed to do well. Moreover, he committed to the label really pushing us and he said he'd make sure I was looked after properly. Derek knew what the relationships in the band were like and assured me that he had my back."

Howe agreed to shelve plans to go solo and carry on with Bad Company. The band recorded an album, 'Holy Water', that would see Bad Co. return to huge commercial heights in America, selling over a million copies. Released in June 1990, 'Holy Water' reached number 35 in the US album charts and also spawned the single 'If You Needed Somebody', which made it to number 16 in the American singles charts. It became the biggest US Bad Company single since 1979's 'Rock 'N' Roll Fantasy'. But even though it looked like the band's problems were behind them, Howe soon found out that this wasn't the case. Mick Ralphs missed a part of the tour in support of the 'Holy Water' album, officially due to 'personal and family' reasons. Howe insists that this wasn't the real reason.

"Mick hated touring and he never liked flying," says the singer. "My view is that he thought if he refused to go out on the road, then the tour would have to be cancelled. But Atlantic were having none of it."

Geoff Whitehorn was brought in as a temporary replacement for Ralphs and the tour went ahead.

"I love Geoff. He's a fine guitarist and I feel he gave us a real edge when we played live," claims Brian. "I felt Mick had become lazy, so having a new face in the band helped a lot. But once Mick saw that his efforts to get the shows cancelled had failed, he came back."

"SIMON SEEMED TO HAVE NO INTEREST IN WHAT WAS GOING ON, SO SPENT AS LITTLE TIME AS POSSIBLE IN THE STUDIO. AS FOR MICK… WELL, HE WAS NEVER THERE. SERIOUSLY, I NEVER SAW HIM."

BAD COMPANY ended up playing shows with Damn Yankees and the package became one of the top-grossing attractions of 1991 in North America.

"The tour was a huge success," says Brian. "I can't remember how long it went on for, but things were going so well that it kept getting extended, which was great for both bands."

The commercial success didn't heal the wounds within Bad Company, though, and by the time the band were ready to record a fourth album with Howe, things had reached breaking point.

"The good thing about making that record [1992's 'Here Comes Trouble'] was that I never saw the other guys at all," he says. "Simon seemed to have no interest in what was going on, so spent as little time as possible in the studio. As for Mick... well, he was never there. Seriously, I never saw him."

Dave 'Bucket' Colwell, a well-known figure on the London music scene, had already been brought in as an additional guitarist on the 'Holy Water' tour. By the time recording got underway for the 'Here Comes Trouble' album, Colwell was even more involved.

"We had to do something, because Mick was doing less and less," says Brian. "That's why 'Bucket' came ►

DARK DAYS

in. But a lot of the guitar work on 'Here Comes Trouble' was done by Terry Thomas. He played a lot of what you hear on 'Holy Water' as well. Terry was definitely multi-tasking, because he was co-writing the songs with me, then producing the album and finally playing guitar in the studio as well!"

For Howe, the recording sessions for 'Here Comes Trouble' only served to emphasise the fact that he really was operating out on his own.

"I look at 'Holy Water' and 'Here Comes Trouble' as my solo albums, really," he confirms. "As things turned out I might as well have put them both out as solo records. Having them in the shops under the Bad Company name probably ensured greater sales. But when I look back now I know how much work I put into making those albums work, and how little help I received from Mick and Simon. It was a dreadful situation to be in."

> "IT WAS NOT A HAPPY BAND TO BE IN AT ALL. THINGS HAD BEEN DETERIORATING SINCE 'DANGEROUS AGE' AND THERE WAS SO MUCH FRICTION BETWEEN ALL OF US THAT IT WAS OBVIOUS I'D END UP GOING SOONER RATHER THAN LATER."

Brian belting it out with Bad Co. "I'd love fans to go back and listen to my four studio albums."

A PERMANENT split was all but inevitable, but despite such internal friction, when 'Here Comes Trouble' was released in September 1992, it still climbed to number 40 in the US charts and delivered half a million sales. Bad Company even had a Top 40 single in the States, as 'How About That' made it to number 38.

Felix Krish had played bass on both 'Holy Water' and 'Here Comes Trouble', but he was replaced by former Roxy Music and Foreigner bassist Rick Wills for the tour in support of the new album, where Bad Company played a number of dates with Lynyrd Skynyrd. There's an audio record of this tour, the live album 'What You Hear Is What You Get: The Best Of Bad Company', that was released in November 1993. It was the first official Bad Company live album of any era. Brian Howe really had had enough of Bad Company, though, and quit the group in 1994.

"It was not a happy band to be in at all," he says. "Things had been deteriorating since 'Dangerous Age' and there was so much friction between all of us that it was obvious I'd end up going sooner rather than later. I found Mick and Simon to be petty and resentful. They may see things differently, of course, but I know both of them wanted a bigger slice of the writing. I felt they never came up with much that we could use, though. What were Terry and I supposed to do? We could have submitted a few songs and then left them to fill in the blanks. But you know where that would have left us? Without enough material to actually make an album."

BAD COMPANY did carry on in the wake of Howe's departure, with Robert Hart on vocals, and they recorded two further albums, 1995's 'Company Of Strangers' and a 1996 effort, 'Stories Told And Untold'. Paul Rodgers finally returned to the fold in 1998, left a year later, then reunited with the band for another year in 2001, finally coming back on a more permanent basis in 2008. Brian Howe is pretty dismissive of what Bad Company have done since he left the group, however.

"I honestly don't think they've released anything worthwhile," he says. "And certainly nothing that's sold as well as the albums I was involved in.

"I'm a fan of Paul Rodgers as a singer. He's clearly one of the greats and has had a major influence on so many people. That is undeniable. But I don't like him as a person. If he's such a brilliant artist and if he's really regarded as the only person ever to have sung with Bad Company – as the band are keen to tell everyone these days – then why haven't they recorded anything new in the last 10 years?!"

Howe believes he deserves a lot more respect for the time he spent in Bad Company, despite the fact that the band's hardcore fans always seem to prefer reaching back to the '70s.

"What we did when I was in the band was exactly right for the times, in terms of music and production. The fact is that I made a big contribution in dragging Bad Company out of the '70s, where they were stuck. I helped take the band into the '80s and onwards to the next decade. That's how they got back to selling big numbers of records.

"I'd love fans to go back and listen to those four studio albums, and appreciate that what was done during that eight-year period was really good and that it stands up well today. Those records gave Bad Company a new lease of life and they proved that the band was far more than the simple nostalgia trip they've now become. As far as I'm concerned, that was the last great creative era for Bad Company."

Photos: Iconic Pix/Joe Giron

The Three Amigos – at least for a while. Bad Company members Simon Kirke (drums, left), Brian Howe (vocals, right) and Mick Ralphs (guitar, sitting) in April 1989

Warrant on the set of the infamous 'Cherry Pie' video. L-R: Joey Allen (guitar), Erik Turner (guitar), Steven Sweet (drums), Jerry Dixon (bass), Jani Lane (vocals). None of these men were qualified firemen, incidentally…

THE MAKING OF 'CHERRY PIE'

Top producer **Beau Hill** reveals what it was like manning the desk for **Warrant**'s monstrously successful second album, 'Cherry Pie'. Interview by *Dave Reynolds*.

THE TITLE TRACK OF Warrant's second album, the double platinum selling 'Cherry Pie', is a song that's come to define an era. Whenever its memorable hook, glossy production values and eye-catching video pop up, you're immediately transported back to the glam metal era of the Sunset Strip – all fun, MTV and shiny-teethed rockers racing up the US charts while selling eye-watering numbers of physical product. Yet the irony underpinning the story of this acknowledged classic is that the song was hurriedly added to Warrant's second disc after the band's record company, Columbia, raised concerns about the lack of an out-and-out single on the record the band had presented as finished.

The album that would eventually be named after this last-minute addition was produced by Beau Hill, who was a skilled songwriter and musician in his own right. Having played with bands in the late '70s and early '80s including Airborne and Shanghai, Hill eventually focused on studio work behind the desk. The American quickly made his name as one of the go-to producers of the '80s thanks to his work on platinum-selling albums by RATT and Winger.

WARRANT FIRST formed in 1984, but the band's definitive line-up came together in 1987. They signed with Columbia in January of 1988 and released their debut album, 'Dirty Rotten Filthy Stinking Rich', a year later. Hill produced that album for the self-styled 'Down Boys' and a tour with Mötley Crüe, together with MTV support for hit singles 'Heaven' and 'Sometimes She Cries', helped deliver a double-platinum seller.

Despite such 'out of the box' success, Hill has subsequently joked that his "crystal ball wasn't that good," while my own *Kerrang!* magazine review at the time claimed that the album was "hardly outstanding."

'Cherry Pie' was a different beast. Warrant's second album, released in September 1990, propelled the five-piece band, led by frontman and songwriter Jani Lane, to a different artistic level. It reached number seven on the *Billboard* album charts and spawned four hit singles, with 'Cherry Pie' and 'I Saw Red' both making it to the *Billboard* Top 10.

HOW DID YOU FIRST GET TO WORK WITH WARRANT, BEAU?
"One of the guys who was managing the band, Eddie Wenrick, took me to a big show Warrant were playing at The Country Club in Reseda. When they played the song 'Heaven' there were 1600 kids singing along with Jani. It was an amazing spectacle, so I figured the band could be big. I signed a deal to produce the first album not long after.

THERE HAVE ALWAYS BEEN LOTS OF STORIES DOING THE ROUNDS THAT THE BAND'S GUITARISTS, JOEY ALLEN AND ERIK TURNER, DIDN'T ACTUALLY PLAY ALL THE GUITAR PARTS ON THE DEBUT ALBUM. IS THAT TRUE?
"It's true that we weren't cutting it in the guitar department and that had to be improved, because all of a sudden we were competing with the likes of Van Halen. I brought the subject up with the band, and understandably it wasn't the most pleasant conversation. But they reluctantly agreed to me bringing in [former City Boy guitarist] Mike Slamer to help. People seem to think it was some kind of conspiracy, but it was simply a case of getting the record to a point where it could stand up in what was a very competitive market at that time. All credit to the Warrant guys, though. They embraced the concept and became better guitar players for it."

WAS IT ALWAYS ON THE CARDS THAT YOU WERE GOING TO PRODUCE THE SECOND WARRANT ALBUM, OR WERE THERE OTHER NAMES IN THE FRAME?
"I think that once the first album went platinum I was always going to get the chance to do the second record. But I don't know if the band or management talked to other producers."

YOU DECIDED TO PUT 'CHERRY PIE' TOGETHER AT THE ENTERPRISE IN BURBANK, WHERE YOU'D ALREADY RECORDED THE FIRST WARRANT ALBUM. WHAT DID YOU LIKE ABOUT THAT STUDIO?
"I believe the studio's main purpose was to record sound effects for films. The owner was a guy called Craig Huxley, who'd been a child actor and had appeared in a number of episodes of the original *Star Trek*

series. That's why the studio was called The Enterprise.

"What really appealed to me about the place was the fact that it had a really great control room. I tended to do a lot of overdubbing in the control room, because it was easier to record and to talk with the guys while we were working. But there was also this unfinished concrete room upstairs at The Enterprise that was used as a storage area. It was like a great big concrete bunker and it turned out to be the perfect place to record drums. I used The Enterprise for a lot of projects and they really looked after me. They treated me like Elvis! I went back year after year and I was really sad when the place closed down in the early '90s."

BECAUSE THE FIRST WARRANT ALBUM HAD BEEN SO SUCCESSFUL, WERE THE GUYS IN A DIFFERENT PLACE MENTALLY WHEN THEY STARTED RECORDING THE FOLLOW-UP?

"They were, yes. The most noticeable thing was that they'd decided to reward themselves for their success by doing pre-production for the second record in Hawaii! We had a lot of fun there – and even managed to do a little work too! The guys seemed to be less nervous and everyone had got over the issue of using Mike Slamer on the first record. Mike had even given Joey and Erik guitar lessons and that, together with non-stop touring, meant they'd become very, very good by the time the second album came around. Those guys took the opportunity they were given and it worked out extremely well for them. Everyone understood how we all worked and we only used Mike Slamer sparingly on 'Cherry Pie'. The guys were all really comfortable with the process coming off the back of a platinum album. Things were more organised, less chaotic."

Jani Lane together with 'Cherry Pie' video star Bobbie Brown. The pair married in 1991, but divorced in 1993.

"'CHERRY PIE' REALLY FELT LIKE WARRANT GRADUATING AS A BAND. THERE WAS SO MUCH GROWTH, NOT ONLY IN THE BAND'S PLAYING ABILITY, BUT ALSO IN THE QUALITY OF THE SONGS."

WE CAN ASSUME THE BUDGET WAS BIGGER THAN THE ONE YOU HAD FOR THE FIRST ALBUM, RIGHT?

"It was, yes. But as with most projects I gave the client a ballpark figure before we got started. I'd include my fee and the budget I needed for the amount of time we'd be recording, and in this case the band and the label both said OK. I never had any budgetary problems with any of the bands I worked with to be honest, because I was never irresponsible with the money. I could've gone crazier, but I've never been that kind of guy."

JANI LANE WROTE THE VAST MAJORITY OF THE MATERIAL ON THE FIRST TWO WARRANT ALBUMS. HOW DID THAT AFFECT THE DYNAMIC OF THE BAND?

"It was absolutely great. The rest of them were as happy as pigs in sh*t that Jani was doing the writing. That was one of the big differences between those guys and RATT. There was no animosity between the band members. They were as pleased as punch to work on Jani's songs and that really did make the job a whole lot easier for everyone concerned."

WHAT DID YOU THINK OF THE QUALITY OF THE MATERIAL THE BAND PRESENTED YOU WITH FOR THE SECOND ALBUM?

"I absolutely fell in love with 'Uncle Tom's Cabin'. I think that's one of the best songs ever, but there was a lot of other great material too. Jani had a way of writing very honest and very vulnerable lyrics without ever being corny. When you heard 'I Saw Red' for example, [a song about catching your girlfriend in bed with your friend] you really believed that was something Jani had experienced. There was some material he had that made me shake my head in wonder. I remember asking Jani how he came up with this stuff, because it was just so good. So given what he was capable of producing himself, I certainly wouldn't have suggested the cover of Blackfoot's 'Train, Train'. But Jani was keen, so we went with it..."

WHAT WAS THE ACTUAL PROCESS OF RECORDING LIKE? DID YOU OPT FOR THE TRADITIONAL DRUMS, BASS, GUITARS, VOCALS, SOLOS METHOD? OR DID YOU GO FOR SOMETHING DIFFERENT?

"I believe we recorded the guys pretty much individually. Steven Sweet had this incredible memory for each song, each drum-fill, each accent. He literally played the songs by himself so that we could get the drums down. The other guys then played along to the drums and we recorded pretty much everything else in the control room. There were a lot of overdubs, because that suited the way we worked together. I liked the control you got in that environment. We could talk to each other, rather than having to shout between rooms."

AND YET DESPITE ALL THIS GREAT MATERIAL YOU STILL DIDN'T FEEL THAT THERE WAS A BIG HIT...

"That's right, but I don't recall exactly what the trip wire was that made me get cold feet over the lack of a hit. Maybe Eddie Wenrick said something. Maybe the label said something. We'd also leak things to the folks at MTV to get a sense of what they felt, because MTV was so important at the time. There was someone there called Rick Krim who was my go-to guy, so maybe the feeling that there wasn't a hit may have come from him. Whoever it was, somebody made me slam the brakes on. I went to Jani and said, 'We don't have a single.' Forty-eight hours later I got 'Cherry Pie'. It quickly turned into the album's title track and that was the song that was immediately put into heavy rotation on MTV. After that Jani could've farted 'The Star-Spangled Banner' and people would've bought it.

WERE PEOPLE NERVOUS ABOUT WARRANT RECORDING AN EXPLETIVE-LADEN RETORT TITLED 'ODE TO TIPPER GORE' THAT WAS DIRECTED AT THE THEN POWERFUL LOBBY GROUP PMRC, THE PARENTS MUSIC RESOURCE CENTER?

"We were listening to live tapes of the band and somebody pointed out that Jani seemed to swear more on stage than anyone else on the planet. So just for fun we decided to edit together this massive, X-rated Jani exposé. I laughed my ass off so much that I almost fell off my chair! I think Jani probably came up with the title and then someone had the idea to put a bit of it as a track on the album. The only problem was that if you used swear words on albums back then, you had to have a big sticker on the front cover warning potential buyers about the explicit content. I was unsure about whether putting the track on the album would kill sales or whether the kids would quite like the attitude behind it. Whatever, we went ahead and did it. There was no interference. We just got on with making the album."

Guitarist Joey Allen: He'd "become very, very good by the time the second album came around."

LATER ON JANI WAS KNOWN TO HAVE MISGIVINGS ABOUT EVER WRITING A SONG THAT ENDED UP DEFINING HIM FOR MANY PEOPLE. WHAT WAS JANI'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SONG 'CHERRY PIE' WHEN YOU WERE RECORDING IT?

"As far as I'm concerned, if Jani didn't like a song, then he wouldn't record it. I remember when he first played 'Cherry Pie' for me over the phone it was a real 'Stop the presses!' moment. I knew we had the album's first single. Of all the songs I've ever produced, that was the tune I simply *knew* was going to be a hit.

"Jani and I talked about it before he passed away and I told him he'd written a genuine rock anthem. How many people have done that? I told him he'd reached so many people and touched their lives with that song and that he should be immensely proud of it. I often wonder whether someone whose opinion he trusted said something to him that caused him to question writing that song."

WERE YOU PLEASED WITH THE ALBUM WHEN IT WAS DONE? AND HOW SATISFIED WERE THE BAND?

"I *loved* the album – and I thought it was a quantum leap forward from 'Dirty Rotten Filthy Stinking Rich'. The difference between the two was like watching freshmen in college moving on to earning their doctorates.

"There was so much growth, not only in the band's playing ability, but also in the quality of the songs. 'Cherry Pie' really felt like Warrant graduating as a band. They were in the big time. The guys were definitely happy with the results we achieved and the album took off straight out of the box."

HOW DO YOU LOOK BACK ON THE WHOLE 'CHERRY PIE' PROCESS NOW, MORE THAN 25 YEARS LATER?

"It was a totally positive experience! I ended up having lots of issues with RATT, another of the LA bands I worked with in the '80s. But not with Warrant. Those records were fun to make and the second album was a real piece of cake – no problems at all."

ARE YOU STILL IN TOUCH WITH THE GUYS TODAY?

"I haven't seen or spoken to those guys in a while, but that's not because there's any bad blood between us. It's just because I've moved on. I've dropped out of the entire music scene apart from some mixing and mastering work I do for the sheer love of it. But I don't go to gigs or anything like that. I'm happy doing what I do, so the opportunity to meet up with the Warrant guys just hasn't been there."

WARRANT
'CHERRY PIE'
Released: 11 September 1990

LINE UP
Jani Lane – vocals, arranger
Joey Allen – guitar
Erik Turner – guitar, arrangement
Jerry Dixon – bass
Steven Sweet – drums

Produced by Beau Hill
Recorded: The Enterprise, Burbank, California, United States

TRACK LISTING
Cherry Pie (Jani Lane)
Uncle Tom's Cabin (Jani Lane)
I Saw Red (Jani Lane)
Bed Of Roses (Bonnie Hayes, Jani Lane)
Sure Feels Good To Me (Johnny B. Frank, Jani Lane, Danny Stag)
Love In Stereo (Jani Lane)
Blind Faith (Jani Lane)
Song And Dance Man (Jani Lane)
You're The Only Hell Your Mama Ever Raised (Jani Lane)
Mr Rainmaker (Jani Lane)
Train, Train (Shorty Medlocke)
Ode To Tipper Gore (Jani Lane)

All photos: Mark 'Weissguy' Weiss

SATURDAY NIG

When *Sounds* journalist *Pete Makowski* joined Southern rockers **Lynyrd** of their powers – and the peak of their good ol' boy madness. Let's head back

"You know the odds of us landing in a fight before the night's over are about even."
– Ronnie Van Zant

"When I get this mad, I could shoot anybody"
– Joe, ex-biker, California

"My Saturday Night Special/Gotta barrel that's blue and cold. They ain't good for nothing/But put a man six feet in a hole." **– Lynyrd Skynyrd**

MAYBE SOME PARTS OF the West Coast aren't as mellow as legend would have it. It seemed that way when we nearly got a taste of another kind of Heavy Metal, that Saturday night...

In the land of Skynyrd, days and nights seem to mingle and fuse themselves into a haze of blurred incidents. Life can look pretty vague through a glass of Jack Daniels. But wait! Let me gaze into my Coke chaser. I see a giant metallic bird machine, with one confused juvenile type creature going on a mysterious journey into the land of Marvel comics and Tootsie Rolls...

A genuine look of sympathy spreads across the cashier's face as I hand over my worthless cabbage [money] to exchange.

"You realise how much this is worth?" she asks, pausing as if to allow me time to change my mind and take the next return flight home.

LA's lit up like some goddamned Christmas tree at night. Millions of billboards register onto my drowsy pupils like flashbacks as the Yellow Cab zips down the highway. We pass all the familiar niteries I'd previously read about. The Rainbow, Roxy, Filthy McNasty's... Filthy McNasty's, hmm...

"But I'm used to four seasons, California's got but one."
– Bob Dylan

NEXT DAY a walk round town, to Tower Records, up the road from the hotel, past the fallout shelter, turn left

Lynyrd Skynyrd in their Southern fried heyday. L-R Allen Collins (guitar), Ronnie Van Zant (vocals), Steve Gaines (guitar), Leon Wilkeson (bass), Gary Rossington (guitar), Billy Powell (keyboards), Artimus Pyle (drums), Leslie Hawkins (backing vocals), Cassie Gaines (backing vocals) and JoJo Billingsley (backing vocals)

HT SPECIALS!

Skynyrd on the road in the States back in 1976, the band were at the height in time for a wild, wild ride featuring guns, booze and plenty of flashing sirens…

down Sunset Strip or Boulevard. The weather, the cars, the women – all nice and hot.

I must be in heaven.

Due to my work schedule I barely see LA, 'cept for a few streets. Initial impressions – it's like a showbiz holiday camp. Its attractions are obvious. It's got so much to offer, from the most breathtaking and exhilarating sights to the tackiest, grease-stained armpits that always thrive in business centres like this. A proverbial energy source.

It's as disposable as the tampons and douches that are constantly advertised on American TV, yet so necessary, an interesting enigma that requires deeper investigation next time round.

OK Skynyrd fans, the story begins here...

"They're gonna take me to California,
Make me a superstar." **– Lynyrd Skynyrd**

THE STARLIGHT Ballroom smells real good tonight. A deceptive name for an outdoor gig. I hadn't made any contact with the Skyns yet. They weren't staying in town. Virtually all the kids have come up by car. The organisation is tight. Spellbound by the wide selection of tasteful motors, suddenly broken by the appearance of a battered Ford Anglia. Where am I?

The audience is mellow, as in Mexican weed. Considering the army of security crawling all over the joint the atmosphere seems pretty loose, although I was later informed there were a few nasty scenes.

The scenery around the venue is breathtaking, not far from the Fault where they say if the big rumble (earthquake to you) does occur it will happen in 1982 when all the planets are in line. A nice location for weed, whites, wine and music.

When the band hit the boards everything becomes a blur. My mind is suddenly beginning to register the situation. I'm in LA, 6000 miles away from my bleedin' bank manager and responsibility. Let's parteeee! Hey pass me that...

Looking back, it wasn't Skynyrd's best night. ►

Words: © Pete Makowski, 1976.
Photo: Getty Images/Koh Hasebe/Shinko Music

LYNYRD SKYNYRD

Something was lacking. Their whole procedure was workmanlike. My brain wasn't responding to anything, 'cept that chick in skintight white trousers bending back and splaying her legs during the solo in 'Freebird' in a fashion that would make Runaway Lita Ford topple off her stacks in embarrassment.

Allen Collins gives it some good ol' chicken scratch

BACKSTAGE, AN assorted array of LA types: Rodney Bingenheimer, *Exorcist* actress Linda Blair, John Carter – a Capital A&R man whose past career includes the composition of 'Peppermints And Incense', a hit for Strawberry Alarm Clock, a group that featured old Skynyrd hand Ed 'Fender' King.

"F*ck man, this group just don't pull any fox," commented one guy.

The scene was incredibly subdued in the dressing room after the show. Introductions were brief. First Gary Rossington. If you haven't already heard, he was involved in a near-fatal car accident, but made it to the shows. The scars were healing, although he was suffering from a shortage of molars and had a slight limp, brandishing a thick wood walking stick. Rossington strolled round calmly. He's just had his gums re-set and teeth replaced, which made it painful for him to talk, and limited his vocabulary to one of his favourite lines: "Wha's happening?" It's a phrase I vaguely remember repeating by the end of my stay.

Next I met drummer Artimus Pyle, who on hearing I was press, stuck his finger across his mouth, glared and backed away in mock fear. Hello Art. Weird guy, brilliant drummer. His shaggy dog appearance makes him look like a wild man. You'd expect to see him leaping around wearing a leotard in a wrestling ring. Good bloke, just hard to pin down, ultra evasive. The rest of the band had already shifted. Awready gon?

I'VE FOLLOWED Skynyrd's career with keen interest since their debut album was released on import. Even before that, when their former producer Al Kooper had spouted words in their praise when he spotted them at a small club in between recording sessions. That was quite a while ago. Now the band are a truly established force. This success comes after a series of reshuffles, including the loss of their original guitarist, the aforementioned Ed King, and drummer Bob Burns. Burns, as you already know, was replaced by Pyle whose previous experience was exclusive to small clubs.

SKYNYRD ARE THIRD GENERATION ROCKERS, BUT FIRST IN *THEIR* GENERATION. NO DOUBT ABOUT IT. NOTHING PRETENTIOUS, OR 'NUTHIN' FANCY' AS THEY WOULD HAVE IT. JUST BOOGIE EXECUTED WITH MAXIMUM TASTE AND FINESSE.

The band kept the line up with two guitarists (Gary Rossington and Allen Collins), in fact the original axe format, and augmented some backing singers in the form of Cassie Gaines, Jo Billingsley and Leslie Hawkins (pause to drool). A new guitarist came in the form of Steve Gaines, Cassie's brother, who demonstrated his chops at Knebworth.

So the current line up is Collins, Rossington, Gaines (guitars), Ronnie Van Zant (vocals), Leon Wilkeson (bass), Pyle (drums) Billy Powell (keyboards) and the Skynettes. Got it? Now read on...

"Stop drinkin' Johnny Walker Red,
Don't drink poison whiskey,
don't you drink it boy." –
Lynyrd Skynyrd

VAN ZANT looked particularly hungover today when Toby Mamis, the band's PR, and I arrived at their hotel. "Ah hate people," were his opening comments as we entered the lobby. He didn't need an illuminated sign above his head to spell out his condition. It was an early start to the morning, the band were playing an afternoon gig at Santa Barbara supporting Jefferson Starship. It was (rock musicians of a nervous disposition don't read this) nine o'clock in the morning!

"No one should have to get up so early," he sighed, nursing his forehead.

"I was up all night," groaned a voice from the corner. Artimus! Eyes covered by shades he looked fragile, almost breakable. The group dragged themselves out to the black limos waiting outside, like coffins into hearses, and we swept off to the airport where their chartered plane was waiting. Yes, the guys have hired their own Freebird to take them to concerts. A much more viable proposition than their old bus. Nice size machine, equipped with couches and bar, the closest thing to an airborne living room I've seen.

"Ahm gonna fly this thing," announced Van Zant with an air of vengeance in his voice, "and when we hit Santa Barbara, we're going to hit it, BAMMM!!!! HAW! HAW!" Suddenly I felt ill too.

The band's manager Peter Rudge (who also manages the Stones) was on board. Pale, chain smoking, a look of concern on his worn features, he looked pretty healthy for a manager. If there's one guy these hell raisers would listen to, it's Rudge. Constantly working, bubbling with ideas, he looked as if he could use 26 hours in a day.

Keyboardsman Billy Powell strolled over, after walking past a couple of times casting a vague glance of recognition. We chatted for a while about a series of pictures he took of me on the first tour gradually getting inebriated and collapsing over a table in Glasgow. Looking much fuller in the face, longer hair, Powell's one of those quiet-spoken guys who definitely has his moments.

Our conversation was cut short when he rushed to the front to watch the plane land. Great crew flying this machine. One of them used to fly a certain rock and roller around, but quit when he thought the guy might get clumsy with the gun that he constantly wielded when drunk.

Santa Barbara airport basically consists of a check-in point and a hamburger stall. On the way to the venue the main topic of conversation was choosing a name for the girls. Suggestions touted included The Honkettes, The Junkettes and Allen Collins' contribution, Puss In Boots.

Gary Rossington carrying a walking stick and showing off the dental work needed to repair his busted teeth and gums after a nasty car crash just before this piece was written in '76

REEFER MADNESS IS IN FULL FORCE, BUT THE KIDS ARE READY TO MOVE. THE AUDIENCE GO POSITIVELY APESH*T AS THE GROUP WALK ON, PLUG IN AND BELT OUT THE OPENING BARS OF 'WORKING FOR MCA'. THIS IS IT! SOUTHERN FRIED.

THE VENUE was only three quarters full due to rain showers earlier in the week and ominous clouds earlier that day that had by now dispersed in favour of California sunshine. The ground on the way to the band's trailer was like swampland. The group disappeared into their mobile dressing room, while I wandered off to watch opening band Heart.

There was a varied collection of West Coast photographers and journalists assembled in the backstage area. The majority, surprisingly enough, there to see Skynyrd...

"In the old days Toby used to ring me constantly trying to get me to write about the band," commented a writer. "Now the situation's reversed. I've travelled from LA to try and get an interview with Ronnie Van Zant."

AFTER A few years of solid touring and hit records Skynyrd are now hot property, suddenly in a position to dictate on their own terms. The situation has escalated even more since the release of their double live platter, which has entered the charts with apparent ease and has all the promise of becoming a BIG seller.

"By the way, which one of those are in the band?" asked the same scribe pointing at a gathering outside the trailer.

"Not many people can tell the difference between the band and the roadies," someone commented wryly.

And it's true. Offstage the band maintain a very low key profile. It's not until they reach the stage that their characters are magnified. Then you know who's who. It's not contrived, it's just their music brings out their individual aggressions, their separate ways of expressing themselves. They put their total energy into the music. The rest comes naturally. Of course there are certain rehearsed steps, but that's all a part of the show.

Rudge is furious. You can tell. His intake of tobacco increases and the atmosphere around him deters any form of communication, i.e. you don't approach him. There are no screens between the band and the trailers, the result being a mass of gawking stoners, staring at the group as if they were exhibits in a cage.

"WHERE'S THE F*CKING GUY IN CHARGE?!", he screams with the kind of authority that commands instant reaction. Within minutes the security guys, who wear T-shirts that bear the unusual slogan – NO DRUGS, NO GLASS CONTAINERS – put up a plastic sheet over the rails.

AFTER AN impressive set culminating with Zeppelin's 'Rock And Roll' as an encore (an unusual choice, totally out of character) Heart left the stage and the road crew worked furiously for the changeover. It seems that if there's more than 15 minutes' interval between acts in the States, a riot ensues. Pretty tight.

Skynyrd attack their set with more force today. It's not their gig, so they have to fight a little harder to get the whole crowd going. A hardcore mass of LS fans made the situation easier. One of the finest qualities about this band that's immediately evident is that the only product they're selling is their music. The whole show revolves around the material. OK, you can accuse 'Freebird' of being a gimmick, a tightly arranged guitar blitz. It's still music.

The band, singers, Gaines are all improving immeasurably. The progress can be noticed day by day. Today was good, but tomorrow was going to be the one... it *had* to be. ►

Photos: Getty Images/Michael Ochs Archive

LYNYRD SKYNYRD

After the show, photographers waited for the band to calm down, compose themselves for some posing. After the session they returned to the trailer only to find the doors jammed. Artimus does a spectacular dive through the window. Following instructions Gaines kicks the door, reducing it to a pile of firewood, while the lensmen snap, hungrily capturing this new piece of Skynyrd destruction. Gradually they disperse when they hear that Grace Slick is having more than a hint of difficulty getting to the stage in her giant platforms.

As we left the venue, we heard that Marty Balin had lost himself on a freeway, oh well, s'pose it's good for the image. Onward ho! Next stop Concord.

RONNIE WAS already in the bar when Leon, Steve and I joined him. Brandishing a Jack Daniels and Coke chaser he looks restless, elbows resting on the table, constantly moving as if he's about to enter a boxing ring. The black hat casts a permanent 12 o'clock shadow across his visage. His voice is a low, quickfire drawl, symptom of after-gig buzz.

We scan the surroundings. Barmaids squeezed into minuscule uniforms, looking like plump turkeys about to burst out of their packaging. The crowd is strictly Californian suburban, conservative in appearance. We didn't fit in. The clientele didn't make a secret of this fact, casting sneaky glances in our direction (easy in these 'intimate gaslit surroundings'), some in bemusement, some confused, some for more devious reasons.

The feeling of being outcast suddenly spreads a wave of rebellion around the table. Skynyrd have always been rebels, ever since their namesake threw them out of school for having long hair.

"You know the odds of us landing in a fight before the night's over are about even," warns Van Zant.

The two guys in the corner look particularly annoyed by the presence of "these long-hairs." But a quick glare from Van Zant warns them that they could end up on the losing side and they instantly find other sights to occupy their beady eyes.

"You see, you just don't know what might happen," he continued, the spasms now moving as far as his shoulders. "There could be someone out there to get you, just 'cause he don't like the look of you. And you got to remember some of these people are carrying guns."

A few more JDs, German beers and we're ready for the disco. Van Zant seems reluctant to move away from the bar and tells us he'll join us after he's sunk his bourbon. Leon and I head downstairs towards this seething sweatbox of sound and (hopefully) vibrant flesh. Two guys on the way out inform us it's a no-no. Still we walk on, only to be stopped at the door and asked to present our IDs. I inform them that I only had a passport and the guys upstairs had let me in the bar.

The two guys at the door, a short balding man whose actions and appearance were similar to that of a nervous weasel, and a large black dude, seem set on making it difficult for us to get in. There is an ominous sign outside: No T-shirts, no jeans. That cancels us out already. No Grubbies, NO GRUBBIES! Hell, why didn't I cotton on earlier? Maybe because their hair's a bit longer and covers the sunburn marks: Suburban rednecks.

I told Leon I'd go back up and get my passport, but he seems to have lost interest in this glorified ultraviolet closet and decides to move on.

"F*ck this place," he curses under his breath. The weasel hears this and seems to take offence.

"Yeah, well just try buddy!" he shouts down the corridor.

Leon walks on.

"Yeah, let's see how big you are!" the guy screams. The distance seems to have a marked effect on this short toad's confidence. "Don't try and make threats you can't back up!" It broke the threads of Leon's patience.

"Right let's get Ronnie," he says between gritted teeth, obviously seething, eyes glaring in the direction of his comrades.

After explaining the situation, Van Zant tips his hat thoughtfully and looks toward me.

"The question is," he says to me. "You've got to ask yourself, is it worth it? Do you want to go back to that disco? If so, we'll go down and sort things out for you."

Now that's what I call real Southern loyalty. These guys were ready to restructure a few craniums for some dumb journalist. I mean they're ready to cream them if the cause is worthy enough.

But it suddenly occurs to me that I'm underage by one year to drink in California (it's 21 there), so weasel features is spared an instant face lift. GROWL! Now I feel like one of the lads.

> "YOU JUST DON'T KNOW WHAT MIGHT HAPPEN. THERE COULD BE SOMEONE OUT THERE TO GET YOU, JUST 'CAUSE HE DON'T LIKE THE LOOK OF YOU. AND YOU GOT TO REMEMBER SOME OF THESE PEOPLE ARE CARRYING GUNS."
> **RONNIE VAN ZANT**

WE MOVE out of this air-conditioned dungeon and hit the freeway, heading to a joint recommended for good liquor and good music. The smell of weed trails thick and heavy out of this glorified pub. This is more like it! But wait a minute. They ain't letting us in. No suit and tie?

"You don't have to be black to be a n*gger in this town," says Van Zant.

We head back to the hotel, back to the bar from whence we commenced the proceedings, only to be stopped at the entrance by a guy who demands that Ronnie takes off his hat. Sacrilege! The next part becomes hazy. I recall some attachments being removed in the corridors, on the way back to our rooms, some anonymous party explaining that this way their revenge would not be detected.

I go back to Leon's room to listen to the tapes. A Skynyrd gig three years ago when they supported Dave Mason in San Diego featuring such goodies as 'Curtis Loew' and 'Swamp Music'.

I told Leon I'm surprised there haven't been any LS bootlegs floating around. "We found a cartridge of a gig at a truck stop," he recalls. "A bad recording. There's even a guy playing guitar along with it. He was awful!"

A drink is needed. All that's available is real cheapo champagne, four bottles. OK. George 'Mellow fingers' Benson is on a TV special. Leon suddenly remembers he's one of Steve's idols and rings him up.

"Steve, wake up goddamn it! Turn your f*cking set on. It's George Benson, mean muthaf*cker, OOH BOA!!!"

Eyes like road maps, two-ply in my mouth, face down, a mouthful of carpet. What time is it? Where the hell am I? Jeezus, this is the first time I've passed out on a hotel floor in a long time. Christ, I'm still in Leon's room. ►

Photo: Getty Images/Michael Ochs Archive

LYNYRD SKYNYRD

Skynyrd in their natural habitat

It's that bloody Parisian rat's piss we had. Nine o'clock. OHMIGOD. I crawled back up to my room and faded away...

THE CONCORD Pavilion, another one of those gigs located in Utopian-type surroundings. They were all there, the downer freaks walking into walls, some remnants of psychedelia babbling incoherently. And those Californian beauties, suntanned, budding, tight little tank tops bursting... Take me backstage.

The promoter Bill Graham had everything in hand. You should see the banquets they lay out. You can even watch the preceding band on closed circuit TV.

Out front, Skynyrd's new stage backdrop, the cover of the new album. Reefer madness is in full force, but the kids are ready to move.

The audience go positively apesh*t as the group walk on, plug in and belt out the opening bars of 'Workin' For MCA'. This is it! Southern fried.

"I hope you people are ready there,
'cause the boys are ready to roll!"

THE WHISKEY rock and roller is definitely on form, minimum movement for maximum effect. Those tortured vocals. Van Zant is a real cowboy. Any second he's gonna pull out a six shooter and fire, I know it! Everything just flows. Rossington sways back and forth without the aid of crutches, in time with his moanin' lead-work, while Collins's wiry frame darts about the stage, sometimes pointing his guitar directly at the onlookers, knocking out licks with machine gun precision. Gaines, encased in the centre, fills in the spaces, occasionally joining his buddies for a three-pronged axe attack.

The set is basically an advertisement for the live album. All the favourites – 'Saturday Night Special', 'I Ain't The One' etc.

Artimus attacks his kit with the vigour and enthusiasm of a human dynamo. The girls are great, it's all so goddamned tight.

Skynyrd are third generation rockers, but first in *their* generation. No doubt about it. Nothing pretentious, or 'Nuthin' Fancy' as they would have it. Just boogie executed with maximum taste and finesse.

You can always gauge the band's opinion of the set by 'Freebird'. It's a number that has to be attacked with genuine enthusiasm or it falls flat on its face. The audience and the band have to bounce their excitement off each other. It's a two-way celebration. This one is a real humdinger. At one point Wilkeson is beating the bass with his fist, Powell mercilessly pummelling the keys while the axes head for rock and roll nirvana. Powell and Wilkeson both come off stage with raw, damaged mitts. Everyone is sweating. It was a bitch!

LATER THAT same evening Allen is in the bar surrounded by an arsenal of Jack Daniels. With him is an Oakland photographer named – would you believe? – Randy Bachman. Small in stature, huge in personality. There's a definite party atmosphere but, in that gaslit glow, it's tinged with the essence of Dante's *Inferno*.

As the energy begins to wane, Leon suggests we move

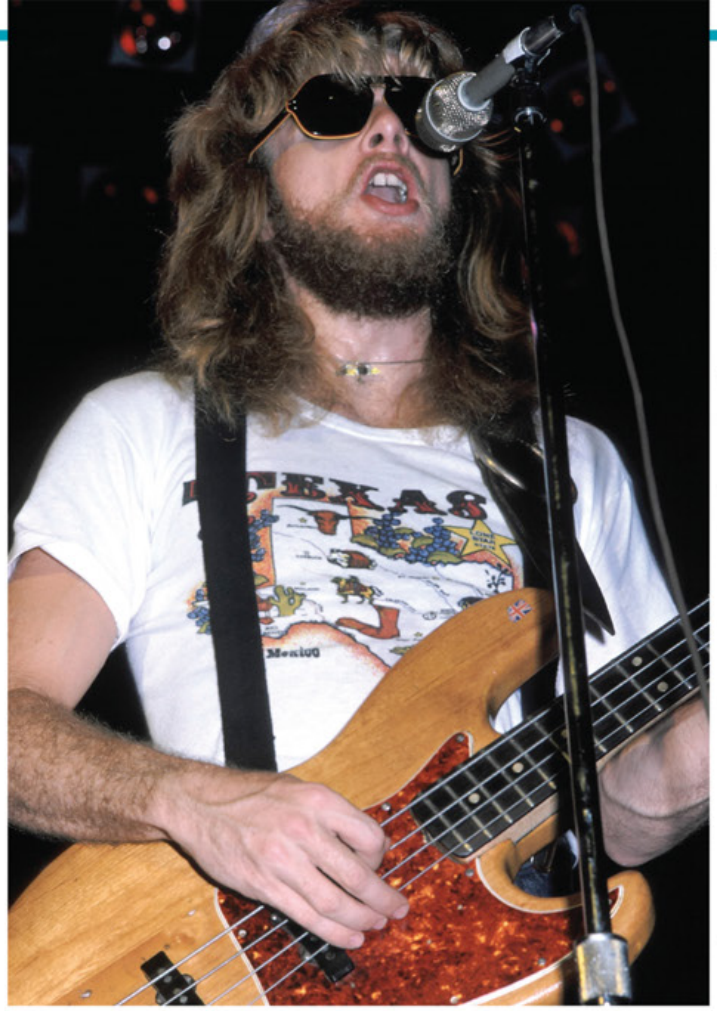
Photos: Getty Images/Richard E. Aaron/Redferns; Getty Images/Bobby Bank/Wire Image

over to the other side of the room where some people are celebrating a chick's 21st birthday. The guys look pretty rowdy. Leon and I blend in well. Even though Leon is dressed in his best duds, a black suit, white ruffled shirt and pumps. PUMPS! "Goddamit," he yells. "Someone swapped my shoes." More booze.

Everything seems quite normal until some guy at the table turns round and begins to half-strangle the chick next to him for no apparent reason. Leon and I casually move to the next table. Up till then I thought these dudes were vaguely connected with the road entourage. More booze.

The scene kind of explodes, the girls freak out and the guys are imploring them to quieten down. "Shaddup, ya f*cking bitch!" Just another tiff, except that it turns out later that the lady is carrying a gun.

The guy calms down, walks over and joins us. "Sorry 'bout that," he says in a genuine apologetic tone. "She wasn't my problem anyway." This guy's name is Chris, although everyone calls him Stinky. He's a biker and tonight he and his brothers have come down to celebrate this gal's birthday.



"THE NEXT TIME I GO ON STAGE I'LL BE THINKING THERE COULD BE A GUY OUT THERE WHO WANTS TO SHOOT ME."
LEON WILKESON

ALL THE people are really friendly, so we don't have any second thoughts when they invite us to continue the partying somewhere down the freeway. Leon finds a chick who can give us a lift.

We move out, the fresh air reactivating the alcohol in my system. I stand in the car park with Stinky, while Leon gets himself together. By now I'm totally insensitive to what's happening around me.

"We got a cook back at the house," Stinky says with a grin. Cook?

"Yeah, a chemist, you know, makes nice crank, (speed), all white."

Leon comes out. "Are you sure you wanna come, I kinda feel responsible." Ah hell, why not? I mean, what could happen?

Then comes Joe. Americans would describe him as a 'mean-looking mutha.' He looks angry.

"I'm mad, I'm real mad," he snarls, confirming my observation. He paces round, eyes almost bloodshot with anger.

"Don't worry, we got some business to sort," says Stinky. They had to sort some guy out who did some wrong to one of their brothers. Joe, Stinky and Jericho, who seem to know Leon, need a lift to the garage to get some gas for their car, which is parked off some freeway.

Jericho and Stinky are pretty loose, Joe still grumbling in the back.

"A've got a gun and I'll use it if I have to," Joe says, face still deadpan.

We're all tanked up. Nothing serious seems to register. We get the gas, then Leon remembers he said he'd pick up Randy back at the hotel.

At the garage, Joe starts to chat up the girl who's driving. "Got a light Leon?" asks a voice in the back.

"Yeh sure bro," he replies casually, searching his pockets for a flame.

"Hurry up with that goddamn light, or I'll do it with this!" My God, Joe is waving a shooter in his hand right behind my head. Leon searches around his pockets, fast.

"You better hurry up. There's a tank of gasoline in the back!" Joe is definitely not pleased.

"Cool it bro'." Leon pulls out a book of matches.

"I ain't scared of using this. How many times have I used this, Stinky?" Joe yells to his brother. Stinky says something to the effect that he doesn't have enough fingers or thumbs to count it. The guys begin getting more forward with the chick and she's beginning to react.

WHEN WE get back to the hotel Leon and I rush out to look for Randy. On the way to the lobby, we bump into Ronnie and Rudge.

"Leon, get the hell back here," screams a voice from the car.

"Sorry got to dash. The guy's got a shooter." Rudge just smiles. We race back to find a drink-sodden Randy rolling about the vehicle. Leon is fully aware of the situation, but knows we have to move at the right time.

"You guys eat sh*t," Randy is screaming at the bikers. Leon tries to calm him down.

"SHADDUP!" Joe is on the verge of erupting.

"EAT SH*T!"

"SHADDUP YOU SHORTCHORD C*CKSUCKER OR I'LL THROW YOU OUT OF THE GODDAMN WINDOW!!!" This is not said in humour.

Joe seems to have taken a liking to the girl, which doesn't help.

He keeps bending over and whispering in her ear. She begins to sob. Leon tries to calm her down and shut Randy up. At this point I'm too drunk to be aware of the danger. Being from a no gun town, I can't comprehend what could happen. Leon knows, but he also knows that there's no point panicking, there's nothing we can do. Just pray this mad mutha doesn't accidentally pull the trigger. ►

LYNYRD SKYNYRD

Skynyrd go way out there to take it to the masses

We get off the freeway and park in front of their car. Stinky and Jericho leap out with the tank of gas. Joe continues to pester the girl. Leon and Randy disappear for a leak while I crash out in the back seat. The girl is beginning to freak now.

"Hey Joe, we've filled the tank," shouts Stinky. Joe gets out the front of the car.

"Come over here brothers. I don't trust you. Come round here!" yells Joe. It's getting a bit over the top if he doesn't even trust his brothers.

"And you don't move either," he says. The streak of silver light flashing from his hand tells us that we won't get far if we try. Randy is still yelling and Leon is desperately trying to hold the girl together.

"As soon as we can, we'll pull some police and make an escape, back to the hotel," says Leon, now fully in control. "There's no point doing it now. They've got guns."

ABSURDLY, WE have to go back to the garage so the guys can get the deposit back on the can. When we get there they jump out and start beating the crap out of each other! Jericho comes over to the car.

"Don't worry if you hear anything while you're driving. It's just us shooting our guns. You are coming, aren't you?" Randy begins hurling abuse at them.

"Yeah, we're coming bro. Here, you can take the little feller. We'll follow," says Leon, almost pushing Randy out of the car.

"Yeah, Yeah!" they all cheer. "C'mon little feller, you come with us!" Randy, now aware of what's happening, quickly sobers up.

"Remember, if you hear anything it's just the guns."

The girl begins freaking out. There's obviously a good reason why she doesn't want to go. "Drive!" yells Leon. The girl is in tears, "Do something." "Just keep driving," says Leon firmly. We can hear the gunshots in the distance.

"DO SOMETHING," the girl screams hysterically, "Do something. I'll pull off the freeway. Do something!!!!"

"Drive! Look, there's a police car. Flag it down. Put your damn foot down! Faster! Faster!!!"

The police car responds. Leon sticks his head out. "The guys in the car are dangerous. They're armed and they tried to procure this lady."

The car speeds off, howling in the distance.

"Now put your foot down, swing round and head back to the hotel!"

When we get back and out of the car, the girl accelerates into the distance.

"Pete, we'll go into your room. Those guys know the number of mine!"

We rush inside. Leon picks up the phone and calls the police. He explains the situation. By now the reality

Photo: Getty Images/Michael Putland

of it has hit us. Leon puts the phone down.

"They got them, but I have to go down to the station to stick charges. It's not illegal to carry handguns in California. I have to get them for endangering our lives and menacing the girl."

LEON IS obviously not keen to face the guys. I suggest he rings Rudge, who would be familiar with this kind of situation. He is, and he approaches it in an amused, relaxed way. Van Zant bursts into hysterical laughter when he hears what's happened. They immediately get Leon into another room. There's a loud knock on the door. Leon leaps round the side. I open it, to be confronted by a beaming Van Zant.

"Welcome to America son. You're to come to my room."

Leon goes off to the police station with the road manager. I sit in Van Zant's room, explaining what happened between his bouts of laughter.

"Aw sorry," he says, chuckling uncontrollably. "But there's a saying in the band – 'Only Leon'. He has the unique ability of getting himself into these situations – and getting out just in time."

Leon confirms this later on, saying that if he ever records a solo album that's what he'll call it – 'Only Leon'. He still looks a bit unnerved when he returns from the station.

"Jeez those guys were cursing," he says. "They're going to be kept in the can until we leave tomorrow, but they were allowed to make one phone call."

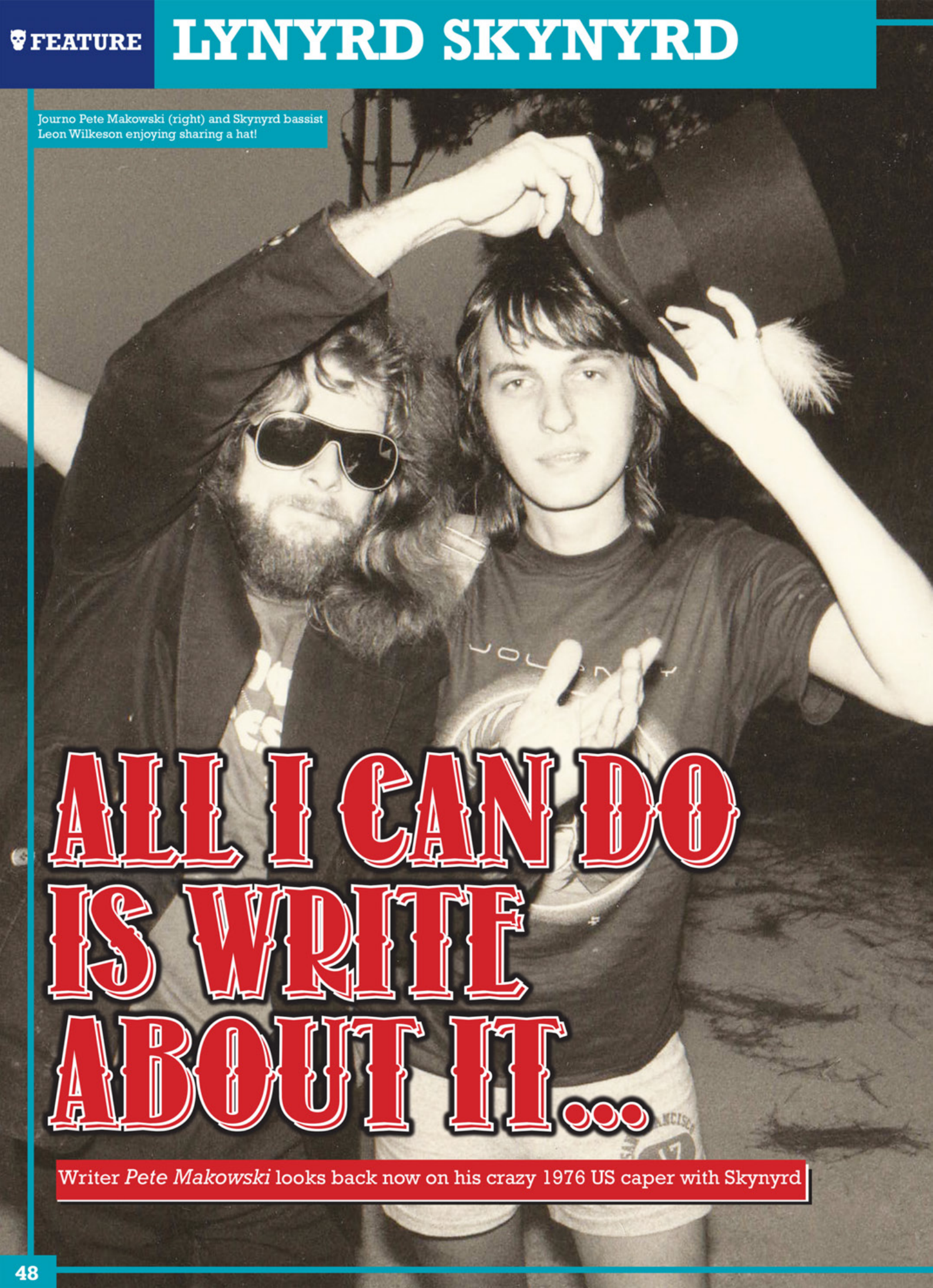
To ensure maximum safety Rudge gets a couple of cop cars to remain outside the hotel and a couple of policemen to patrol inside. We move Leon's stuff into his new room, listening for steps and knocks. This hotel has about 15 separate entrances. It's now getting into the early hours of the morning. We go to the coffee shop, and saturate our hangovers with milk, tea and cigarettes.

"The next time I go on stage I'll be thinking there could be a guy out there who wants to shoot me," says Leon.

"Are you coming on to Utah?" Van Zant asks me. The land of the Osmonds. No booze, no cigarettes. Such a swift change of climate would probably derange my mental circuits. Half of me was yearning to stay for the whole damn tour. The close, family-like atmosphere made me appreciate why Rossington was so keen to get back on the road. This is probably the only band who could put you through so much in three days. I never had any doubts about Skynyrd musically. I now respect them equally as people, God bless 'em.

I bid them all farewell, 'cept for Leon, who made an invisible exit.

Apparently some bikers turned up at the airport "and not to see them off" someone commented afterwards. No problems, Skynyrd know how to look after themselves. They've done alright so far.



Journo Pete Makowski (right) and Skynyrd bassist Leon Wilkeson enjoying sharing a hat!

ALL I CAN DO IS WRITE ABOUT IT...

Writer *Pete Makowski* looks back now on his crazy 1976 US caper with Skynyrd

"Everything now is very stage-managed. Writers rarely get the sort of access to the bands that they did 20 years ago. Pete Makowski went on the road with Lynyrd Skynyrd and got a gun pulled on him. I can't see that happening with The Ting Tings." **– Mark Blake, author**

"WELCOME TO AMERICA BOY. Heh! Heh!" Ronnie Van Zant was chuckling helplessly as I told him the tale of the night's activities in Concord, California that I ended up reporting on in *Sounds* music newspaper, issue dated 30 October 1976. It had involved two speed-crazed bikers with guns, a midget photographer by the name of Randy Bachman, a hysterical woman, and Skynyrd bassist Leon Wilkeson. It was an unforgettable trip that has lived long in the memory...

When I first heard the news of Lynyrd Skynyrd's plane crash on 20 October 1977 – almost a year to the day since my story with the band had first appeared – it shook me to the core. Not because I flew in the very same aircraft 12 months previously. I was 20 years old and was self-destructive, though I felt invincible at the same time. But this was the first time people in the music business I knew well had died.

BEING A music journalist in the '70s and '80s, it was rare that you developed a genuine connection with artists. Usually people like us were regarded with suspicion, a necessary evil. But occasionally you could build a friendship and a connection. These were very different times – pre-social media, pre-paparazzi. The music press was populated with genuine fans like me, and because we had more access to bands, occasionally you were welcomed into the fold. That had happened to me with Skynyrd.

WHEN I FIRST HEARD THE NEWS OF LYNYRD SKYNYRD'S PLANE CRASH ON 20 OCTOBER 1977 – ALMOST A YEAR TO THE DAY SINCE MY STORY WITH THE BAND HAD FIRST APPEARED – IT SHOOK ME TO THE CORE.

My history with the band went back to the first time I heard their debut album on import. At the time I was still an office boy at *Sounds* newspaper, on my way to crossing over to a full-time job as a writer there. I passed the album over to the journalist Martin Hayman, who gave it a glowing review.

It wasn't long before I was going to see Skynyrd to do a live review when they supported Golden Earring on their first British tour in November 1974. When I first met the band I immediately clicked with ivory tickler Billy Powell after an extremely raucous, alcohol-sodden evening in Glasgow. I don't actually remember much of that night, to be honest, but a couple of years later Powell produced some photos of me passed out over a table in the hotel bar.

AFTER THAT baptism of fire I keenly followed Skynyrd's career, went to gigs, reviewed albums and generally hung out with the group.

While nowadays rock bands seem desperate to develop an image as some kind of modern day pirates – screwing, drinking and snorting their way around the world – with Skynyrd it really wasn't an act. It was their way of life.

Every time we met up there was something wild to talk about. Whether it was original drummer Bob Burns having a nervous breakdown and throwing a cat out of a hotel window. Or the tour manager overdosing in Piccadilly Circus. Or guitarists Allen Collins and Gary Rossington appearing on crutches, all black eyes and missing teeth after taking on a hotel bar full of police boxing cadets. This wasn't PR spin. This was the lifestyle of Southern rockers.

WHEN I was offered a chance to go on the road with Skynyrd on the West Coast of America in '76 it was a real no brainer, especially as the band had at last found a replacement for departed guitarist Ed King in the youthful form of Steve Gaines. His older sister Cassie also came on board as a backing vocalist. It was going to be my first trip to Los Angeles and my first big 'on the road' story.

My ideas about the States had been fuelled by images on TV and in the movies, but the place exceeded all of my expectations. It was my first experience of all-night TV. It was my *only* experience of being asked by the receptionist what my star sign was when checking into a hotel!

For the first couple of days I felt like a fish out of water. LA was really hard to navigate without a car or any contacts. My hotel had no bar or restaurant, and the Skynyrd band members were staying outside the city as they'd been banned from pretty much every place in town. But things soon livened up...

THE FIRST question I'm constantly asked about that trip is, "Was the Skynyrd escapade really as wild and unhinged as you made it out to be in your feature?" The second is, "Whatever happened to the bikers?"

The answer to the first question is easy – it's a resounding yes!

The simplest way to answer the second question is by giving a taste of my first meeting with Leon Wilkeson after the Concord showdown, in February 1977.

"Remember our little incident with the bikers?" Leon asked me. "Well, they've decided to put the guys on trial and I got a court order asking for me and a witness to attend. You're the only witness."

Fortunately for me the charges were dropped.

LOOKING BACK today I still feel real sadness about the loss of some great musical talent in the Skynyrd air crash. Steve Gaines had so much potential. He was a really laid back, congenial person, as was his sister Cassie. Yet his personality and energy brought a whole new dimension to Skynyrd, who by that time were beginning to look a bit frayed at the edges.

A versatile musician who was equally comfortable playing jazz, country, blues and rock, Gaines was easily the most talented member of Lynyrd Skynyrd and really raised the bar, bringing out the best in the rest of the band, as you could hear on their final album with him, 'Street Survivors'.

Since the Skynyrd crash, rock'n'roll has been littered with the corpses of artists who were cut down in their prime. Names like Phil Lynott, Randy Rhoads, Cliff Burton and Chris Cornell spring to mind. Of course we grieve their loss, but there's also an undeniable feeling of joy that we get by listening to the amazing music they produced and knowing that it will be influencing generations to come.

RIP the original Skynyrd!

Photo: Ross Halfin

GET YOUR KIX!

They may have scored a platinum album with 1988's 'Blow My Fuse', but for some reason **Kix** were never lauded as rock titans. *Dave Reynolds* aims to put that right...

Kix shot in the garage at photographer Mark Weiss's house, Rumson, New Jersey, September 1989. L-R: Brian 'Damage' Forsythe (guitar), Jimmy 'Chocolate' Chalfant (drums), Sreve Whiteman (vocals), Donny Purnell (bass), Ronnie '10/10' Younkins (guitar)

All photos: Mark 'Weissguy' Weiss

IT'S THE EVENING OF Friday 18 November 1988 and Kix guitarist Brian 'Damage' Forsythe is on stage at Birmingham's Edward's No.8 club. To be honest, though, it's pushing things a bit to call the tiny area where he's performing a stage. I'm not sure what you'd call it, really. But what I am sure about is that Forsythe looks dangerously pale. For a man who claims never to be unwell, he looks very odd indeed.

During a break in a quite ferocious set the Baltimore-based band are delivering on their UK live debut, Brian is about to swap guitars with a member of the band's crew when he finally reaches breaking point. Forsythe moves behind the drum riser occupied by Jimmy 'Chocolate' Chalfant and is violently sick, before returning to the stage feeling slightly better, yet still suffering the effects of a bout of what turns out to be food poisoning.

There's still a problem, though. There's an electric cooling fan sitting under the drum riser, pointing in the direction of bassist Donnie Purnell. Now it's Purnell's turn to feel queasy as the unmistakable smell of vomit drifts across the room. A few punters are also finding it hard to keep their dinner down. This really isn't what Kix are hoping for from their first ever UK live show.

"I really wondered whether it was going to turn into that scene in Monty Python's *The Meaning Of Life*, where the whole room is throwing up after Mr Creosote blows up!" Brian Forsythe laughs today.

This episode is one of the most powerful memories the ever-amiable Forsythe and equally cordial vocalist Steve Whiteman have of Kix's first foray onto foreign shores. It was an all-too-short, three date UK jaunt that remained the band's sole venture into Europe until Kix finally returned late last year for a one-off date appearing at the Rockingham event held in Nottingham in October 2017.

TAKING A no-nonsense approach to their craft and revelling in songs about sex, cars, heat and explosives (though not always in that order), the origins of Kix lie in a band called Shooze, formed by Forsythe, Purnell and fellow guitarist Ronnie '10/10' Younkins in Hagerstown, Maryland back in 1977. The group was briefly known as The Generators before settling on Kix, which is the name of a popular US cereal brand. With a line-up completed by the addition of Whiteman and Chalfant – who replaced original Shooze drummer Donnie Spence in 1979 – Kix always had a strong work ethic. The band built up a decent following along the East Coast of the States and eventually secured a deal with Atlantic Records thanks to their manager at the time, Bob Aiss, who'd also managed fellow Maryland act Face Dancer. ►

OVERLOOKED

Brian and Steve could always find innovative ways to amuse themelves on tour...

Kix released their eponymous debut album, produced by Tom Allom, in September 1981. It was a nine-track piece of bombastic plastic that gave a respectful nod to AC/DC, while retaining a 'Made in Maryland' feel. The album featured a number of songs that would remain live favourites for years to come, notably the raucous 'Yeah, Yeah, Yeah' and 'Atomic Bombs'. Yet 'Kix' was a commercial failure and the band were forced to go back to the drawing board for a second album, where guitarist Brad Divens, later of thrash outfit Wrathchild America, replaced Younkins. Whereas the debut album consisted entirely of band originals, 1983's 'Cool Kids' was produced by Pete Solley and stank both of compromise and record label interference. Featuring three cover songs ('Burning Love' by Spider [USA], Franne Golde's title track, and Nick Gilder's 'Body Talk') together with a number of originals, the majority of the tunes sounded like a band desperately trying to appease a record company demanding a hit to justify their investment.

> "THE MARQUEE WAS A COOL PLACE TO PLAY. BUT BECAUSE THERE WERE RESTRICTIONS ON THE DB LEVELS IN THERE, WE WEREN'T VERY LOUD."
> **BRIAN 'DAMAGE' FORSYTHE**

I FIRST saw Kix when they headlined the L'Amour club in Brooklyn in May 1986 on a bill that also featured Cinderella. The band had released their third album 'Midnite Dynamite' in October of '85, produced by Beau Hill and with Ronnie Younkins back in the fold. Kix's reputation was on the up. Maybe it was the jet lag on a very late night in New York, but I came away disappointed by the band's performance, especially when I compared it to what Tom Keifer and his bandmates had to offer. I later reasoned that this was because Cinderella rehearsed their set to within an inch of its life, while Kix opted for a more spontaneous approach, with frontman Steve Whiteman preferring to channel the spirit of James Brown. Cinderella put on a performance, but I soon warmed to the fact that Kix put on a *show*.

'Midnite Dynamite' was a huge improvement on 'Cool Kids'. It saw Kix reverting back to recording good, honest, hard rock songs just as they'd done on their debut album. Steve Whiteman may have been the band's MC, but it seemed clear to me that bassist Donnie Purnell was the *de facto* band leader. A feisty little chap, I got the impression that Purnell didn't suffer fools gladly. By this time he'd become the band's principal songwriter, but Beau Hill was convinced Purnell needed help if the band were to compete with the likes of RATT, Def Leppard and Mötley Crüe, the era's big rock hitters. Purnell hooked up with Bob Halligan Jr., whose song '(Take These) Chains' had been a big US hit for Judas Priest in 1982. Crack The Sky's John Palumbo and Kip Winger also got in on the writing action, the latter three years before the Winger debut album appeared.

"Every time we did a record Donnie just got better as a writer," notes Brian Forsythe. "He'd started to find his groove on 'Midnite Dynamite' and things really clicked for us with Beau Hill. The album didn't do as well as we'd hoped, but we were heading in the right direction."

ALTHOUGH 'MIDNITE Dynamite' wasn't particularly successful, you couldn't help but be impressed by the amount of work Kix put in to promote it on the road. "We were relentless," says Whiteman. "We were always very popular along the East Coast, so we'd bank the money we'd make from shows there to be able to head out into other areas of the country on our own dime

playing to crowds that, at the time, were out of our comfort zone. We soon started to sell out shows in places like Cincinnati and Detroit. Our hard work made things happen for us. Atlantic had noticed the pockets of support we had in other parts of the country and that definitely helped us when promoting the next album."

A falling out between Purnell and Hill meant the producer didn't work on the follow-up to 'Midnite Dynamite' and Tom Werman was behind the desk when Kix began work on 'Blow My Fuse'. It would become the most successful record of Kix's lengthy career. Was Werman the band's choice, or the label's?

"The label and our management were both very keen on Tom Werman," recalls Steve. "Every band he'd worked with had done well. He was a great A&R guy in that respect, because he could smell it when something was going to be a hit."

"I didn't feel like Tom was forced on us," says Brian. "He'd produced some classic records for acts like Cheap Trick and everybody was excited to work with him, even though Donnie wound up not getting along with him! Tom surrounded himself with good engineers – John Purdell and Duane Baron in our case – and they did a great job. I think Donnie felt those guys were doing all the work and Tom was just goofing off. Tom wasn't a musician like Beau, but he did have a very good ear and I respected him for that. I got along with him."

Werman believed Kix finally had the makings of a hit record with the material they had for 'Blow My Fuse'. Did the band feel the same way?

"Not really," says Whiteman, honestly. "After what had happened to the first three albums, all we could be was hopeful. But we'd worked very hard on the demos. We knew we had good songs."

"You know what? I *did* sense that we really had something," states Forsythe, offering a different point of view. "It was like you could feel the universe getting behind us. On that record everything fell into place."

Indeed it did. It didn't hurt that at this point in their career Kix were being managed by Mark Puma and Joe Gerber, who also looked after the affairs of Twisted Sister and Zebra. With both of those acts also signed to Atlantic Records there was already an established relationship between management and label – and with a great record produced by a band that wasn't afraid of hard work, the omens for 'Blow My Fuse' were good.

'80s metal photo sessions often happened in the bathroom!

"WE OPENED FOR YNGWIE MALMSTEEN, BUT I DIDN'T KNOW WHO HE WAS. HE CAME FROM A DIFFERENT AREA OF MUSIC TO THE KIND OF THINGS I WAS LISTENING TO."
STEVE WHITEMAN

"MTV got on board," notes Steve. "They started showing the video for 'Cold Blood' and that took the album to gold status. And then 'Don't Close Your Eyes' was the single that helped us to platinum."

THE BAND'S first UK trip had initially been planned to coincide with the release of 'Blow My Fuse' in September of 1988, but an unfortunate event meant the shows were shunted back a couple of months...

"We were doing dates up and down the West Coast of the States," recalls Steve. "The guy responsible for driving our van got drunk and wrote it off in a crash, so we had to use the money we'd saved for the trip to the UK to buy a new vehicle."

"I'd been to England on a visit there in 1986, so I knew what to expect, but not how we'd be received," explains Forsythe, a self-confessed Keith Richards devotee, and the one who most embraced the '80s glam look in Kix.

"The reason for the trip was to see if we could spark some interest," recalls Steve. "But it wasn't really a tour, because we only played three shows."

The first gig was in Birmingham and as a *Kerrang!* writer at the time I went along for the ride. I met the band at their base camp – the infamous Columbia Hotel in London's Lancaster Gate – at noon. The five band members, assorted roadies, co-manager Joe Gerber and I crammed into a mini-bus heading for the West Midlands. After dropping Donnie Purnell, Jimmy Chalfant and the crew off in Birmingham city centre, where the band had booked a day room at a Holiday Inn, the rest of the entourage (Steve, Brian, Ronnie, tour manager Bob Daniels and I) continued up the M6 for an appointment with esteemed DJ Paul Anthony at Signal Radio in Stoke-On-Trent. Given that he was the main songwriter, I found it odd that Purnell wasn't with us. "He didn't do interviews, except for the odd bit of magazine stuff," explains Brian. "Steve and I were always the guys who did the majority of the media work."

After the interview, the bus driver found a local pizza joint in Stoke where we stopped for a meal. Somehow I ended up footing the bill for it.

"I don't remember what kind of pizza I ate – and no one else was feeling sick – but I was feeling rough before we went on that night," continues Brian. "I felt like I wanted to throw up as soon as we got to the venue. I tried, but I couldn't. I was feeling miserable on stage and then just after we did 'Don't Close Your Eyes' I went behind ►

the curtain... There was nowhere else to go. There were all these cables all over the floor and I thought 'I can't puke all over them', so I ended up going under the drum riser! And that's where Donnie's fan was..."

ON THE ride back to London afterwards, Brian quietly tried to make himself as comfortable as he could by lying over a couple of seats at the back of the van. The others were upbeat about how the first show had gone. I'd been delighted to hear the song 'Yeah, Yeah, Yeah' performed as an encore. It would be the only time that Kix would play the tune during those three dates.

"So many people were shouting for us to play it," Ronnie Younkins told me. "We couldn't really hear anything through our monitors," laughed Donnie Purnell when I asked him what he'd thought of Kix's first ever British gig. "But the crowd seemed to love it."

Spelling wasn't Brian's strong point!

"I THINK WE FELT THE SUCCESS WOULD CONTINUE. BECAUSE 'DON'T CLOSE YOUR EYES' HAD BEEN SO SUCCESSFUL, WE ASSUMED THE NEXT RECORD WOULD BE BIGGER. BUT IT NEVER HAPPENED."
BRIAN FORSYTHE

The final two shows of the trip were both in London. Kix opened for Yngwie Malmsteen at the Dominion Theatre on 20 November, then made a headlining appearance at the Marquee Club just down the road the following night.

"I didn't know who Yngwie Malmsteen was," admits Steve. "He came from a different area of music to the kind of things I was listening to."

"I wasn't a fan either," adds Brian. "I knew who he was, but I didn't find him particularly friendly when I met him backstage. Joe Lynn Turner, who was singing with Yngwie back then, was a nice guy. But I remember Ginger from the Quireboys being there, so I hung out a lot with him and I've kept in touch with him ever since."

While Malmsteen kept his distance, there was a more friendly face backstage in the form of Twisted Sister's Dee Snider, who then introduced Kix onstage.

"It was nice of him to do that," acknowledges Steve. "He'd remembered Lemmy doing the same for Twisted Sister when they first played in the UK. Y'know, 'These guys are my friends, be nice to 'em'. He did the same thing for us the next night at the Marquee too."

"The Marquee was a cool place to play," adds Brian. "But because there were restrictions on the Db levels in there we weren't very loud. Dee said it sounded like we were playing through toy amps!"

THE NEXT time I'd encounter Kix would be on 1 April 1989 at the Spectrum in Philadelphia when the band appeared as the opening act on a three-band arena tour headlined by RATT, with Britny Fox second on the bill. Having just finished a gruelling cross country trip with Jetboy opening for them, Kix were understandably pleased to be on their first ever arena tour.

"We'd played some arena shows before, opening up for the likes of Aerosmith and Judas Priest," notes Steve. "But the RATT dates were the first time we'd done a full arena tour."

It was great for me to see the Kix guys having fun and enjoying some much-deserved acclaim, and the band's popularity made their dressing room a busy place to be post-gig. So much so that I ended up doing my *Kerrang!* interview with Brian in the shower, the two of us sitting on a couple of chairs...

The band's homecoming at the Capital Centre in Landover, Maryland on 3 April was a night to remember. Acknowledging that this was home turf for Kix, the boys in Britny Fox offered Kix the middle slot that night. "That show was unforgettable," recalls Brian. Indeed it was. Kix were on fantastic form and countless packets of 'Kix' cereal were thrown on stage in a bizarre act of homage to the band. "That only ever happened at home," laughs Steve. "The crowd would throw them at me and I'd throw them right back!"

Dates with Tesla and Great White followed in the summer of '89, but the band's label Atlantic were unwilling to spend any more money promoting 'Blow Your Fuse'. According to Brian, it was Guns N' Roses/ Great White manager Alan Niven who asked the label

why they hadn't yet released 'Don't Close Your Eyes' as a single. Atlantic duly listened. "And the album went into overdrive," says Brian. 'Blow Your Fuse' went platinum in the States and for the first time Japan started to show a real interest in the band too. Everything looked good for Kix to continue their upward trajectory.

"I think we felt the success would continue," admits Brian. "Because 'Don't Close Your Eyes' had been so successful, we assumed the next record would be bigger. But it never happened. 'Hot Wire' was a better record than 'Blow My Fuse', but it came out at a bad time. To be honest we had a sense of *déjà-vu* with that record. Back in '83 when we were gearing up for the 'Cool Kids' album, our A&R guy showed up with a copy of Def Leppard's 'Pyromania'. When 'Hot Wire' was ready, this time the head of our record label took a copy of Nirvana's 'Nevermind' out of his office desk drawer."

Cereal killer!

AS THINGS began to tail off in the States, some people think Kix should've returned to the UK and tried their luck in Europe. But that would have been complicated, given that like a lot of rock bands at the time, Kix were no longer getting much label support. The group soldiered on into the mid-'90s, ending their association with Atlantic after a disappointing live album – 1993's 'Kix Live' – and effectively breaking up after the independently released 'Show Business' in '95.

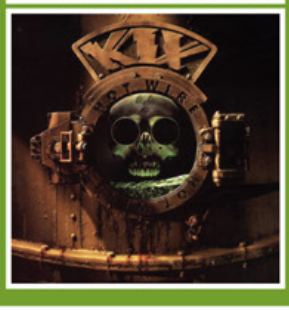
Relationships weren't good within the group at that time. Brian Forsythe believes having Purnell as the principal songwriter worked "due to the dynamic of the band." Steve Whiteman is more damning of Purnell's role: "He squashed our ability to create. It was his way or the highway."

Kix returned in 2003 without Donnie Purnell. The bassist was replaced by Mark Schenker, who'd been working with Steve Whiteman in his post-Kix outfit, Funny Money. The band even put out a new album, 'Rock Your Face Off', in 2014 and are still as energised by the concept of Kix as they have ever been.

"The fans have embraced us again," says Forsythe with justifiable pride. "It's been fantastic."

KIX TOP LIX!

Brian 'Damage' Forsythe selects his five fave Kix tunes



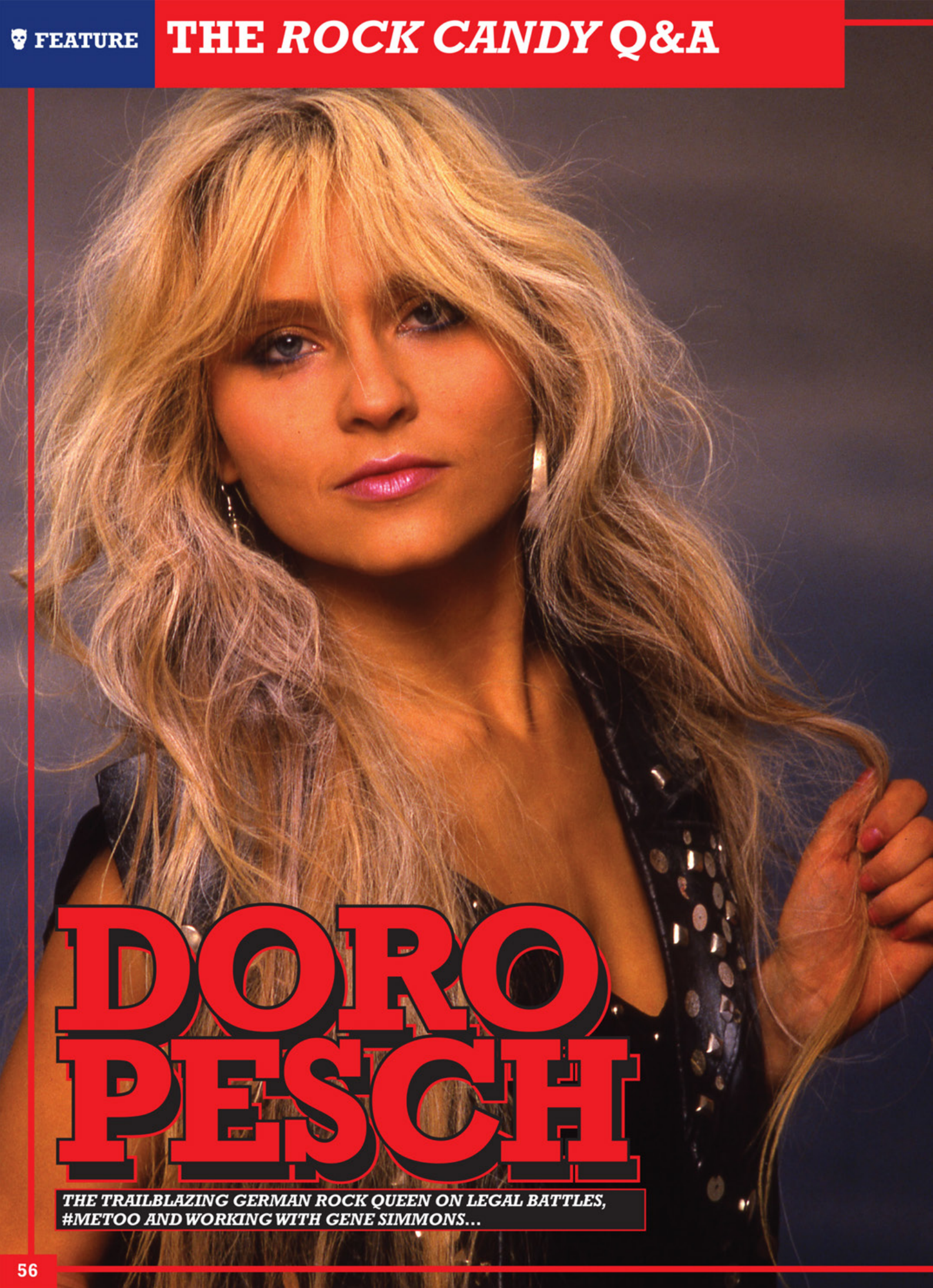
'Heartache' (from 'Kix', 1981)
"I still remember when Donnie brought the idea for this song to rehearsal one day. It was one of those tunes that just sort of appeared out of the ether already written. It came together really naturally and quickly. I love the poppiness and catchiness of this song. It's very memorable like any good pop song should be – and it's a fun one to play live!"

'She Dropped Me The Bomb' (from 'Blow My Fuse', 1988)
"A straight-ahead rocker from the school of AC/DC! This was the teaser track they released before 'Blow My Fuse' actually came out. We wanted to send out the vibe that we were coming, so get out of the way! This was the perfect song to get that point across. Whenever I'm going over the set list, preparing for an upcoming Kix show, even if this song is not included in the set I'll still play it just to warm up and get my blood pumping... It works every time."

'Cold Blood' (from 'Blow My Fuse', 1988)
"I've always loved this song. It really sums up the whole 'Blow My Fuse' era for me. Live, it consistently sounds good and is easy as well as fun to play. The video for this one got us on regular rotation on MTV as the most requested video. It really helped to take the band to the next level. I think that's why 'Don't Close Your Eyes' took off so well when the record company finally released it."

'Pants On Fire (Liar Liar)' (from 'Hot Wire', 1991)
"B-side smoker! I can't remember ever doing this one live. Maybe it's because the vocals are so high. This one has a nice gritty edge to the guitars! I used my '58 Gibson Les Paul Special guitar through my '66 Blackface Fender Bassman amp on this one. We recorded most of the 'Hot Wire' album at the famous Sunset Sound Studios in Hollywood. Lots of cool vibes there!"

'Hee Bee Jee Bee Crush' (from 'Hot Wire', 1991)
"When I went to listen to 'Pants On Fire' it rolled straight into this song, so I had to give this one a mention as well. Two B-side smokers right next to each other! Donnie co-wrote these two with John Palumbo, who always contributed a more raw sound to the songs."



DORO PESCH

THE TRAILBLAZING GERMAN ROCK QUEEN ON LEGAL BATTLES, #METOO AND WORKING WITH GENE SIMMONS...

You suffered from tuberculosis in your teens. How did that change your attitude to life and music?
"It made me realise that I shouldn't take anything for granted. When you're that close to death it does make you seize every moment and make it count. Before I was admitted to hospital I was a normal kid who never took things seriously. After I came out of hospital I was determined to do my best to take my love of music as far as I could. My first band, Snakebite, would rehearse every single day, whereas other bands that were the same age would just rehearse every so often when they were in the mood. That sums up the difference."

You became the first female to front a band at the Castle Donington Monsters Of Rock Festival in 1986 when you played with Warlock. Were you aware at the time that you were a pioneer?
"Not at all. I just wanted to be as good as I could possibly be. I never expected the festival to be as big as it was. I remember going onstage and being overwhelmed by how many people were there to watch Warlock. It was a big deal for us to be at such a huge event. But it wasn't about me that day. It was about the band."

You fought a very long legal battle with your former manager Peter Zimmermann to get the rights to the Warlock name. Did you ever feel like giving up?
"It took much longer than I expected to win that battle, and there were times when things looked really hopeless. But I'm not the sort of person to give in. I had a lot of faith in the German legal system – until the decision went against me, that is. I was screaming so much I had to be carried from the courtroom. I didn't really have the money to carry on the fight and appeal, but somehow I kept going. I thought it would take maybe a year to sort it all out. It actually took 20. But I got there in the end. It would have been easier and cheaper to accept that I'd lost the name, but that was never an option. Why should I let someone take control of the name when they had no right to it?"

What did you learn from working with Gene Simmons on your 1990 'Doro' album?
"Gene had such a great work ethic and was a total gentleman. Plus he went out of his way to teach me about the blues. He turned up one day at the studio with a stack of about 50 records and told me to listen to them, because it would give me a greater appreciation of what the blues is all about. He also took me to see Dr. John play in a small New York club. That was amazing. I remember people being shocked to see us there! I learnt so much from working with him. I was a huge fan before I met him, and Gene did so much to help me. Such a wonderful person and musician."

Who are your female role models when it comes to musicians and singers?
"I admire Ann Wilson, Jody Turner of Rock Goddess, Lee Aaron, and Janis Joplin. But what's important is that I've never made a distinction between male and female singers, so for me these people are on the same level as Ronnie James Dio, David Coverdale, and Rob Halford. They're all big influences."

You're a vegan. Is that tough to deal with when you're on tour?
"Yes, it's tough to stick to a vegan diet. I was a vegetarian for a long time, but somehow it felt wrong not to go over to a completely vegan existence. There have been occasions when I've had to live on eating almost nothing, but things are a lot easier now."

You've lived in New York for a long time. What appeals to you about the city?
"When I first came here in 1986 I just fell in love with the place – its artistry, its energy and its expressiveness. At the time it had some amazing studios, incredible people and wonderful record stores. A lot of that has gone now, but I still have a small place there. Even a shoebox costs a fortune in New York! My original place on Long Island was destroyed by Hurricane Irene in 2011. That was a big blow. But I now have a place in Florida too, because it's a lot warmer in the winter."

You're very keen on celebrating landmark moments in your career. Why is that so important to you?
"The fact that we keep losing people like Lemmy and Ronnie Dio has made me really aware that I should celebrate everything – every milestone. When I see heroes like them dying, it reinforces my determination to be positive about my own career and what I've achieved. And that means making a big fuss of those landmark moments."

"I'VE NEVER COME ACROSS PROBLEMS OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN MUSIC. I'VE ALWAYS BEEN TREATED WITH REAL RESPECT BY EVERYONE. I'M NOT SAYING OTHER PEOPLE HAVEN'T HAD DIFFICULTIES, BUT THAT'S NOT BEEN MY PERSONAL EXPERIENCE IN METAL."

You've done some acting in the past. Have you got plans for anything else in that area?
"I've done three films with the Swiss writer and director Luke Gasser [*Anuk – The Path Of The Warrior*; *Anuk 2 – The Fire Mountain;* and *Anuk III – The Dark Flood*]. I loved doing them, even though the budgets were very small, and I'd like to do more, though only as a sideline. What doesn't interest me at all is doing anything in Hollywood."

With the current #MeToo campaign happening in the movie industry, do you think something similar is needed in music?
"I can honestly say that I've never come across problems of sexual harassment in music. I've always been treated with real respect by everyone. I'm not saying other people haven't had difficulties, but that's not been my personal experience in metal. I did have problems like that when I was at school, though. Inappropriate things happened to me, but I never even told my parents, because I know it would have devastated them. Besides, in those days, nobody listened to kids, so I kept it all to myself. Now, thankfully, what children have to say is taken a lot more seriously."

Your song 'All For Metal' on new album 'Forever Warriors, Forever United' features loads of guests. Have you got a large contact book?
"I suppose I do! It's wonderful to have so many good people involved, like Chuck Billy [Testament], Mille Petrozza [Kreator] and Jeff Waters [Annihilator]. That track was so much fun to record – and everyone involved really is fighting for metal. I can't wait to do the song live. I really think it will become an anthem."

Interview by Malcolm Dome. Photo: IconicPix/Ray Palmer Archive

G N'R – LIFE AND DEATH ON SUNSET

NICE N'

IT WAS GUNS N' ROSES who single-handedly took rock'n'roll downmarket and back to the streets in the mid-'80s. They gave the big middle finger to the ever-increasing demands of US radio stations and in doing so found millions of kindred spirits across the world, and experienced mind-boggling success.

NONE OF the band members were natives of Los Angeles, the hub of America's music industry and the place where dreams were made – or, mostly, shattered. Like thousands of other contenders, Axl, Izzy, Duff, Steven and Slash were born elsewhere, but either by circumstance or choice ended up in the City Of Angels, looking to make something of lives that seemed pretty chaotic. Music was their weapon of choice, and their mish-mash of influences – from punk to glam and all points in between – led to the Guns N' Roses sound eventually becoming *way* more than the sum of its parts.

GUNS N' ROSES came together on Sunset Strip, the den of iniquity that bred bands with a nasty attitude. Without money and with zero desire to hold down a proper job, musicians survived any way they could, while hoping to be 'saved' by a major record label deal. It wasn't pretty. By the group's own admission, girls were routinely exploited for sex, cash and food; hard drugs were taken with the kind of nonchalance only youth allows; and living conditions were best described as squalid. But this was a lifestyle adopted by choice, fuelled by the belief that such behaviour was character-building and a necessary rite

SLEAZY

of passage if you wanted to inculcate that all-important rock'n'roll attitude. The problem was that many of the bands that were living this way just weren't very good.

GUNS N' ROSES were different. Bassist Duff McKagen said the first time they rehearsed it was like "thunder had hit the room." That's probably an exaggeration. Early Guns material was promising, nothing more. But once the band fully hit their straps they were absolutely unstoppable, leaving every other hopeful LA rock act choking on their dust. When I reviewed the band's 1987 debut album, 'Appetite For Destruction', for *Kerrang!* magazine at the time of release, I had no hesitation in awarding it the maximum five Ks. It was so obviously light years ahead of the competition. But what I didn't know while writing my review was the detail of how Guns N' Roses had come together, what life experiences the five members had been through to create this utterly combustible rock'n'roll sound.

OVER 16 pages, and more than 30 years later, *Rock Candy* has dug deep into the underbelly of the very earliest times of Guns N' Roses to fully understand exactly what alchemy produced the most exciting American rock group since Van Halen. Thanks to eyewitness testimonies from the people who were there, and quotes from the band themselves, we think we've constructed a unique insight into the making of greatness. We hope you agree...

Howard Johnson

Photo: Mark 'Weissguy' Weiss

G N'R – LIFE AND DEATH ON SUNSET

Guns N' Roses performing at their first ever sold-out show at local club the Troubadour, Los Angeles, California, 22 November 1985

RAISING HELL IN THE CITY OF ANGELS

Paul Elliott was the first UK journalist to interview **Guns N' Roses** right at the outset of their career. In this detailed extract from his book, *Guns N' Roses – The Life And Times Of A Rock 'n' Roll Band*, Elliott recounts the band's rise from the gutter and revisits his first ever meeting with G N' R in LA, before 'Appetite for Destruction' changed rock music forever...

AXL ROSE WAS 21 when he fled Indiana for California. Born in Lafayette on 6 February 1962, he was raised as William Bailey, the eldest son of Sharon and L. Stephen Bailey. It was at the age of 17 that he discovered his biological father was a drifter with the surname Rose who'd abandoned his mother when William was in his infancy. He subsequently changed his name to W. Axl Rose. The initials W.A.R were, he later said, purely coincidental. So too, he claimed, the fact that Axl Rose was an anagram of oral sex.

In adolescence he was frequently in trouble, arrested for a variety of petty offences including public intoxication, criminal trespass and, more sinisterly, contributing to the delinquency of a minor. He was sent to a psychiatrist, whose diagnosis cited evidence of psychosis. He also loved music, principally hard rock – Led Zeppelin, Queen and Nazareth – although the great albums made by Elton John in the early '70s inspired him to learn piano. His closest friend was Jeff Isbell, known as Izzy, later Izzy Stradlin. "We were long-haired guys in high school," Izzy recalled. "You were either a jock or a stoner. We weren't jocks, so we ended up hanging out together." Izzy played drums. He was yet to start on guitar. Axl could sing. In high school they got a band together. "We'd play covers in the garage," Izzy said. "There were no clubs to play at, so we never made it out of the garage." They both knew that they would never make it in a cultural backwater such as Lafayette, with a population in the late '70s of approximately 45,000. They had to get to a big city.

> RIGHT FROM THE START THEY LOOKED LIKE A GANG, THE WAY THE STONES AND THE DOLLS AND HANOI ROCKS HAD. AND AXL ALREADY LOOKED LIKE A ROCK STAR.

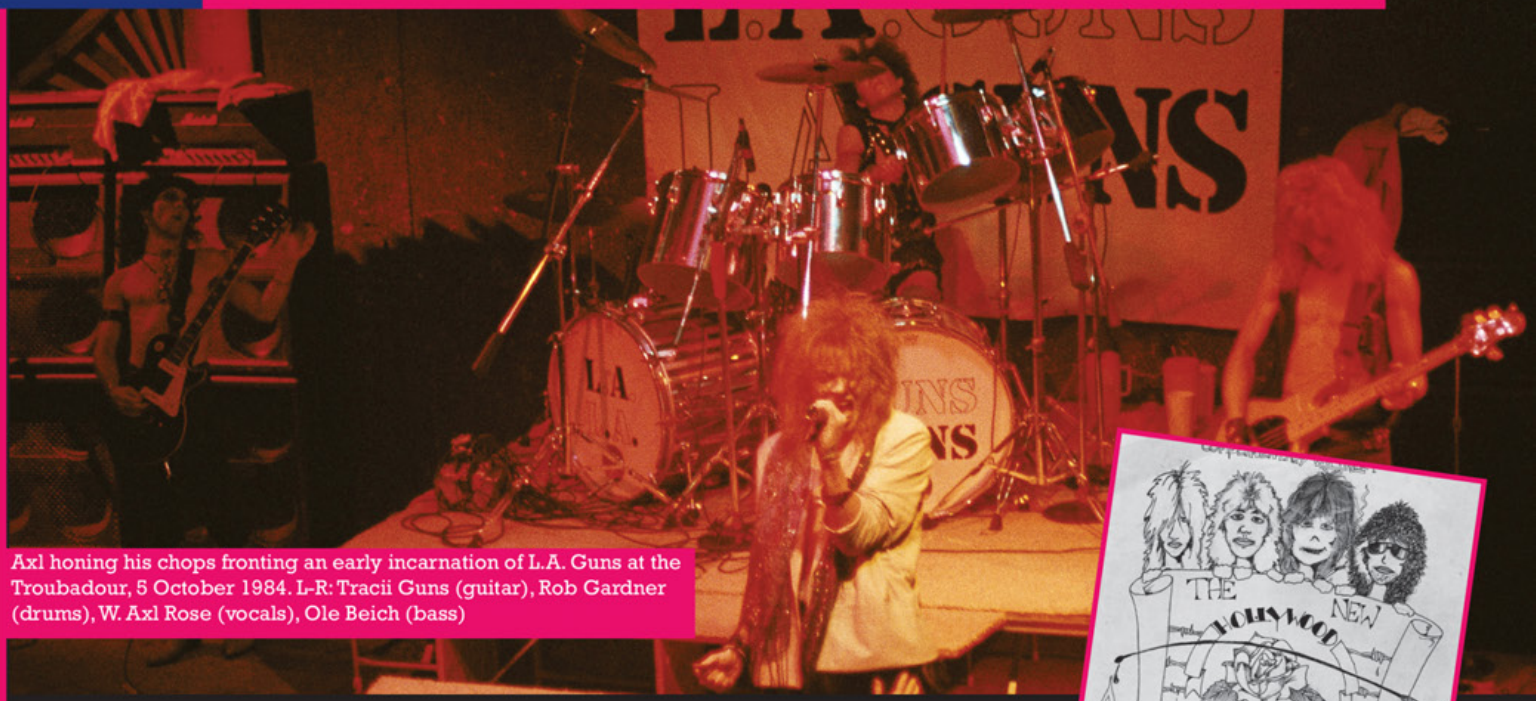
IZZY WAS the first to get out. By 1980, he was in LA. Born in Lafayette two months apart from Axl on 8 April 1962, he never grew to hate the place as Axl did. "It was cool growing up there," he said. "There's a courthouse and a college, a river and railroad tracks. It's a small town, so there wasn't much to do. We rode bikes, smoked pot, got into trouble..." Even so, he left Lafayette at 18, and soon after relocating to LA joined a punk band with the underwhelming name of Naughty Women. After just two months he left for another punk band, The Atoms, but when his drum kit was stolen he turned to bass and then rhythm guitar in a heavy metal band, Shire.

It was in 1983 that Izzy and Axl formed a new group together, after Axl had briefly sung for a metal band named Rapidfire. Their new band was originally named A.X.L. and featured Chris Weber on lead guitar, Rick Mars on bass, and Johnny Kreis on drums. The band's name was subsequently changed to Rose, and then to Hollywood Rose. Three songs written and demoed by Hollywood Rose would become part of the early Guns N' Roses repertoire – 'Reckless Life', 'Anything Goes' and 'Shadow Of Your Love'. Yet the band was unstable. Following a split in 1984, Axl joined L.A. Guns, led by guitarist Tracii Guns, and Izzy played for London, a band that had previously featured bassist Nikki Sixx prior to him forming Mötley Crüe. There was also a brief period in which Weber and Kreis were replaced in Hollywood Rose by Slash and Steven Adler. Nothing came of that, and in 1985 Hollywood Rose was reformed with the line-up of Axl, Izzy, Weber, bassist Steve Darrow, and former L.A. Guns drummer Rob Gardner. Later, Weber was replaced by Tracii Guns, and from this, Guns N' Roses was born.

THE BAND toyed with various names. Among them was one name that was designed to shock: AIDS. Another was bizarre: Heads Of Amazon. Eventually, they combined the names of L.A. Guns and Hollywood ►

Photos: Getty Images/Marc S Canter/Michael Ochs Archives

G N'R – LIFE AND DEATH ON SUNSET



Axl honing his chops fronting an early incarnation of L.A. Guns at the Troubadour, 5 October 1984. L-R: Tracii Guns (guitar), Rob Gardner (drums), W. Axl Rose (vocals), Ole Beich (bass)

Rose into something that sounded good. And after Steve Darrow was replaced by Ole Beich, another former member of L.A. Guns, the band played its first gig as Guns N' Roses on 26 March 1985 at the Troubadour, the famous club where so many singer-songwriters had made their name in the '70s. This original version of Guns N' Roses lasted for just a few weeks. Tracii Guns, Rob Gardner and Ole Beich quickly departed. When Guns N' Roses returned to the Troubadour on 6 June 1985, there were three new faces in the band alongside Axl and Izzy. Slash was on guitar, Duff McKagan on bass, Steven Adler on drums. It was the first public performance of the classic and definitive Guns N' Roses line-up.

Slash and Steven Adler were a little like Axl and Izzy. They went a long way back. When they first met at an LA school, Bancroft Junior High, both were aged 13. The two kids bonded over a love of rock'n'roll. Steven was a Kiss fanatic, and was already playing guitar.

"'Kiss Alive II'," Slash said. "That's what Steven was jamming to every single day." Steven's influence would have a profound effect on Slash's life. As Slash stated in his autobiography: "I owe it all to Steven Adler. He is the reason that I play guitar."

Slash was born Saul Hudson in Hampstead, West London, on 23 July 1965. His father, Tony Hudson, a white Englishman, and his mother Ola, African American, both worked in the music industry. Tony was an artist whose paintings featured on album covers by Joni Mitchell and Neil Young. Ola was a clothes designer whose clients included John Lennon, Ringo Starr, Linda Ronstadt and David Bowie. Ola created the costumes worn by Bowie in his starring role in the 1976 movie *The Man Who Fell To Earth*.

Soon after Slash was born, Ola moved to Los Angeles to focus on her career, leaving Tony to raise their son at the home of his parents in a city 130 miles from London, Stoke-on-Trent. Slash was four when Tony took him to LA. He was raised in a bohemian environment in Hollywood, and it was a friend of Ola's, the actor Seymour Cassel, who gave young Saul the nickname Slash, having noted that the kid was always running around doing things fast.

Like Slash, Steven had come to Los Angeles as a young boy. He was born in Cleveland, Ohio on 22 January 1965, and named after his father Michael Coletti, an Italian American. He was five years old when his father left the family. It was after his mother Deanna moved them to California and remarried, to Melvin Adler, that young Michael was renamed Steven Adler. By the time he reached his early teens, Steven was getting into all sorts of trouble. In that sense, he and Slash were made for each other. The only thing they disagreed on was Steven's assertion that Kiss was the greatest band in the world. For Slash, it was Aerosmith...

...A DEFINING moment in Slash's life came when Steven suggested that they should start a band. Steven said he would play guitar. He also said that Slash should play bass. When Slash asked his grandmother for money to buy a bass guitar, she instead gave him a nylon-stringed flamenco guitar that she had stored away for years. Within a matter of months, Slash was so accomplished a guitar player that Steven decided he would be better off playing drums. Another school friend who witnessed Slash's rapid development as a guitarist was Dave Kushner, who would eventually play alongside Slash in the band Velvet Revolver. "I've known Slash since we were 14," Kushner said. "We rode skateboards, he was great at that, and when he started playing guitar he was just amazing. When he was in a three-piece band in high school I'd watch him."

This high school band that Slash had, named Tidus Sloan, did not include Steven, who was still learning his chops as a drummer. But in 1983 the two old friends formed a new group, Roadcrew, named after the Motörhead song '(We Are) The Road Crew'. It never really got going. Chief among their problems was Adler's sloppy attitude to rehearsing and a failure to find a suitable singer. But what they did find, albeit for a short time, was a great bass player, a lanky, bottle-blond punk

rocker from Seattle named Duff McKagan.

At 21, McKagan had already been around the block. As he said in 2004: "Before I got to LA I played in 29 punk rock bands in Seattle." He was born in that city on 5 February 1965. Christened Michael, but known from an early age as Duff, he was the youngest of eight children, and grew up in a home that was filled with music. "They always played the rock stations in my house when I was a kid," he said. Aged 12 when punk rock broke big in 1977, he was instantly converted. The two records that had the biggest influence on him were the debut album by The Clash, released in '77, and an album from 1970 that did so much to shape punk, The Stooges' 'Fun House'. It was Duff's brother Bruce who taught him to play bass, and by the age of 14 he was playing in a punk band, The Pennies, who in 1979 opened for LA hardcore legends Black Flag in the days when Ron Reyes was their singer before Henry Rollins...

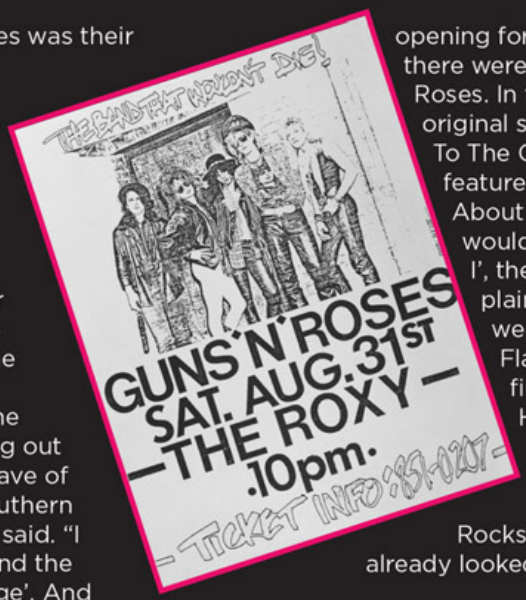
"GETTING TOGETHER AND JAMMING, THERE WAS A SORT OF MATURITY ABOUT THE BAND. THERE WAS SOMETHING GOING ON THAT NOT A LOT OF PEOPLE HAD. IT HAPPENED NATURALLY, AND IT WAS VERY COOL."
SLASH

...AMONG THOSE 29 punk bands that Duff played with were The Fastbacks, The Veins, The Fartz and 10 Minute Warning. As he jumped from one band to another, he also alternated between bass, guitar and drums, and at one point he turned down an offer to become drummer for British punk band Angelic Upstarts. He got into the hardcore music that was coming out of California, and the second wave of UK punk. "I had all the early Southern California hardcore singles," he said. "I loved Black Flag's 'Damaged' and the GBH record 'City Baby's Revenge'. And the Germs' '(GI)' was a big deal for me. That record changed the course of American punk rock."

While he stuck to playing punk, he was also heavily into classic rock, soul and funk. "I listened to the Stones and Led Zeppelin too," he said. "I was always into r&b stuff – Marvin Gaye's 'Let's Get It On', and Prince." And it was a Prince album – '1999', a double album released in 1982 – that had a major impact on Duff, an influence that went beyond music. "That record came at a time in my life when it helped me blossom as a musician," he said. "And everything I was going through at that particular time, it took me away from." In the early '80s, heroin had become endemic in the Seattle rock scene. Duff said that his girlfriend of the time, and his roommate, were addicts. He had to get out of there, and LA seemed as good a place as any to escape.

In the short time that Duff McKagan was in Roadcrew, he felt he and Slash and Steven sounded good together. They stayed in touch after the band broke up. Slash and Steven didn't last long in Hollywood Rose. Slash later auditioned for Poison, despite his distaste for that band's over-the-top glam image. He didn't get the gig. A crazy dude called C.C. DeVille did. It was after Slash had joined another group, Black Sheep, that Axl and Izzy came back for him. They needed a lead guitarist for their new band, Guns N' Roses. They also needed a bassist and drummer. Slash accepted the offer, and brought Steven and Duff with him.

As soon as these five guys started rehearsing together, the chemistry between them was immediately evident. "It was," Duff said, "like thunder had hit the room." And while that first show at the Troubadour on 6 June was low-key – they were opening for Mistreater, a band that went nowhere – there were signs of what was to come for Guns N' Roses. In the set list for that show were powerful original songs such as 'Reckless Life' and 'Move To The City'. There were two songs that would feature on 'Appetite For Destruction' – 'Think About You' and 'Anything Goes' – and two that would come much later on 'Use Your Illusion I', the beautiful ballad 'Don't Cry' and the plainly less romantic 'Back Off Bitch'. There were covers, too – the Stones' 'Jumpin' Jack Flash', Rose Tattoo's 'Nice Boys', and for the finale, the Elvis Presley classic 'Heartbreak Hotel', played punk rock style. And there was something else they had, right from the start. They looked like a gang, the way the Stones and the Dolls and Hanoi Rocks had, and Axl, wearing a red tartan kilt, already looked like a rock star...



...THE GANG mentality in Guns N' Roses deepened during a period in which the five band members lived together in a single rented room behind a low-grade guitar store close to the Strip. The room measured just 16 feet by 10 feet. Here, they wrote songs, rehearsed, squashed cockroaches, got laid, and got wasted. They stole lumber to build a tiny loft that slept three. Somehow they all existed on less than four dollars per day, enough for a meal of biscuits at Denny's, a cheap restaurant nearby, and for a bottle of Night Train, a potent fortified wine favoured by homeless drunks. When money ran out, they relied on the generosity of the girls they slept with. "I remember not having money," Slash said. "But it was ►

Photos: Getty Images/Marc S Canter/Michael Ochs Archives; Mark 'Weissguy' Weiss

G N' R – LIFE AND DEATH ON SUNSET

Slash performs onstage at the Troubadour with an exotic dancer. LA was "a place where the whole sleaziness of the band could fester."

The band together with Geffen Records A&R folk Teresa Ensenat and Tom Zutaut after opening for Ted Nugent at the Santa Monica Civic, 30 August 1986. Geffen took a chance on G N' R and signed the group in March of '86.

a fun time. Girls gave stuff to me. There were lots of sluts around, and a lot of crabs got transferred..." As Duff recalled of the time they spent sharing that room: "It was a place where the whole sleaziness of the band could fester."

Also in the summer of 1985, the band acquired a manager, Vicky Hamilton, who had previously represented Poison. Steven Adler described Hamilton as "smart as a whip." She needed to be to handle a band whose gig posters billed them as "fresh from detox" and "Addicted: Only The Strong Survive." As Slash later said, with knowing understatement: "We were living very haphazardly at that time." And yet, no matter how messed up they got, they kept on writing great songs. "That was something that spontaneously happened," Slash said. "It just had this natural feel. And in that whole 'discovering ourselves' period from '85 through '86, getting together and jamming, there was a sort of maturity about the band. There was something going on that not a lot of people had. It happened naturally, and it was very cool. All we did was play whatever felt right at the time. We were just doing our thing."

In this formative period, a number of key moments in the band's career played out on the stage where Axl, Izzy, Slash, Duff and Steven first performed together as Guns N' Roses. It was at the Troubadour that three of the band's greatest songs were played live for the first time: on 20 July, 'Welcome To The Jungle'; 20 September, 'Rocket Queen'; 10 October, 'Paradise City'. And four months later, on 26 February 1986, it was a blistering show at the Troubadour that convinced Tom Zutaut of Geffen Records to sign Guns N' Roses. Four years after Axl Rose journeyed to LA with the dream of making it as a rock'n'roll star, that dream would become a reality...

17 MARCH 1987

IT WAS just another beautiful day in LA. The high sun had burnt away the brown haze of smog over the city. Late in the afternoon, the five members of Guns N' Roses were seated at a table in the open-air restaurant at the Hyatt hotel on Sunset Boulevard...

...All of the guys in Guns N' Roses were chain-smoking cigarettes and swigging bottled beer...

...Axl and Izzy were noticeably more sober than the others. Axl, shirtless under a fake-fur coat, his eyes hidden by aviator shades, sat back in his chair and said little. When he did speak, his voice low and dry, he chose his words carefully. He was not one for small talk. He also had a presence like he had on stage. He carried himself like a star...

...After an hour, it was decided that I would interview the band in my hotel room at the Park Sunset, right across the street from the Hyatt. It was a cheap place, and the room was small. Axl sat on the floor, cross-legged. Beside him, Izzy crouched with his head in his hands and his elbows resting on the large bed where Slash, Duff and Steven all sat. Within a few minutes, Duff had fallen asleep. The room filled with cigarette smoke.

They had also brought a case of beer with them. And in one corner, on a chair behind Slash, Alan Niven [their manager at this point] kept a watchful eye on his charges. Unknown to me at the time, Niven had instructed them to not discuss drugs during this interview. He had a signal for them to change subject whenever drugs were mentioned – he rustled his copy of the *LA Times*.

Early in the conversation it quickly became apparent who was running this show. Axl was the band's chief spokesman, and he began by revealing how he and childhood friend Izzy had come to LA from Indiana to form a band, like so many others before them. "People used to say to us, 'You guys should go to California'. And when we got here, we found we were five years behind the times. You show up and think you're gonna fit in, and they say, 'So what boat did you get off?'"

I asked if LA was any better than Indiana. "Must be," Izzy said. "I'm still here."

"We grew up in Indiana and we got a lotta sh*t," Axl recalled. "I got thrown in jail over 20 times, and five of those times I was guilty. Of what? Public consumption – I was drinking at a party, underage. The other times I got busted cos the cops hated me. So no, I don't have much love for that f*cking place!"

"No one in the band was born in LA," Izzy said. "We all ended up meeting here."...

...Slash got riled when I put it to them that Guns N' Roses were that year's model of the perennial LA bad boy band. "The only reason we get that bad boy sh*t," he snapped, "is because the other bands in LA are such wimps." For Axl, the worst band in LA was Poison, the prettiest of the pretty boys, whose debut album 'Look What The Cat Dragged In' was a huge hit. "Poison f*cked it up for all of us," Axl stated bitterly. "They said that everyone in LA was following their trend." Similarly, Izzy was dismissive of Mötley Crüe, describing that band as kids' stuff. "Mötley Crüe is more teen metal," he said. "We go for a more roots-oriented sound than most other bands around here." It was Axl who summed it up best. "This," he said, "is the only real rock'n'roll band to come out of LA in the last 10 years. Van Halen was the last."

I asked how the band survived before they signed the deal with Geffen. Steven spelled it out: "G-I-R-L-S." Asked how they made money, Izzy replied casually: "Sold drugs, sold girls, sold... we just got it. We managed. In the beginning we'd throw parties and ransack a girl's purse while one of the guys was with her."

Slash, again, was deliberately provocative. "Not being sexist or anything," he said, "but it's f*cking amazing how much abuse girls will take."...

...IT WAS clear that Guns N' Roses exulted in their bad reputation. I put it to them that another source at Geffen had told me Guns N' Roses "take everything." First there was laughter, then a rustle of Alan Niven's newspaper. Steven made a joke of it. "We were just going to ask you about this bed here..." Izzy issued a terse, "No comment at all." Axl played it smarter. "We take everything," he said, "and that goes in every single way. We take everything from everything we hear, from what we see and do..."

Axl had an open-minded attitude to music. He talked about the great American rock bands of the '70s that had influenced Guns N' Roses. "In my mind," he said, "the hardest, ballsiest rock band that ever came out of America was Aerosmith. What I always liked about them was that they weren't the guys you'd want to meet at the end of an alley if you'd had a disagreement. I wanted to come out of America with that same attitude. So, one reason why there's been this Aerosmith comparison is, f*ck, they were the only goddamn role-model to come out of here."

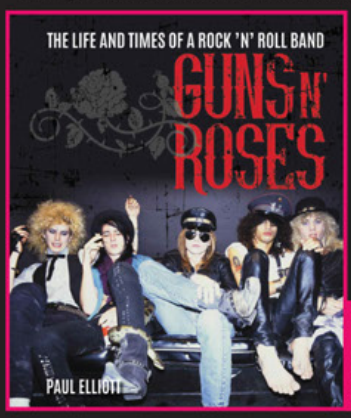
He also cited the legendary Southern rock band Lynyrd Skynyrd as a touchstone for one track on 'Appetite For Destruction' – a ballad he referred to at the time as simply 'Sweet Child'. "I'm from Indiana," he said, "where Lynyrd Skynyrd were considered God to the point that you ended up saying, 'I hate this f*cking band!' And yet, for our song 'Sweet Child' I went out and got some old Lynyrd Skynyrd tapes to make sure that we'd got that downhome, heartfelt feeling."

More surprising was what Axl said about the other albums he had bought during the making of 'Appetite For Destruction'. "In the last year I've spent over 1300 dollars on cassettes, everything from Slayer to Wham! – to listen to production, vocals, melodies, this and that." Few rock'n'rollers would ever have admitted to buying a Wham! album. Axl did. And what he revealed to me then was a master plan for Guns N' Roses, of which 'Appetite For Destruction' was only the beginning. "We've got our progressions already planned out," he said. "How we're going to grow. This record's going to sound like a showcase. I sing in, like, five or six different voices, so not one song is quite like another, even if they're all hard rock."

WHAT I HAD JUST HEARD, I COULD NOT QUITE BELIEVE. IN 'IT'S SO EASY' GUNS N' ROSES SOUNDED LIKE THE GREATEST ROCK'N'ROLL BAND IN THE WORLD.

At the end of the interview, as the band members prepared to leave my hotel room and Duff McKagan was roused from his drunken stupor and dragged to his feet, Slash took me to one side. He produced a Sony Walkman cassette player from inside his leather jacket and said, "Listen to this." I pulled on the headphones and heard a song from 'Appetite For Destruction' named 'It's So Easy'. It had a sh*t-kicking punk rock riff as nasty as the Sex Pistols at their peak. And what Axl sang in this song was jolting: *"I see you standing there/You think you're so cool/Why don't you just... f*ck off!"*

When it was done, I handed the Walkman back to Slash. What I had just heard, I could not quite believe. In this song, Guns N' Roses sounded like the greatest rock'n'roll band in the world. Slash said nothing as they left. He didn't need to. He knew what they had. It was many years later that he said to me: "Back then, I played that sh*t to you to say, now you know what the f*ck we're talking about."



Paul Elliott's *Guns N' Roses – The Life And Times Of A Rock 'n' Roll Band* (via Palazzo) is available now

Photos: Getty Images/Marc S Canter/Michael Ochs Archives

G N'R – LIFE AND DEATH ON SUNSET

Back in the mid-'80s **Jetboy** guitarist **Billy Rowe** became firm friends with the members of **G N' R** even before that band had formed. So how does he remember those wild and crazy times on the burgeoning Sunset Strip scene? And why did things turn sour between the two groups? Interview by *Howard Johnson*.

BILLY, YOU'RE ACTUALLY FROM THE BAY AREA. SO HOW DID YOU FIRST GET TO BE PART OF THE LA SUNSET STRIP SCENE AND BECOME FRIENDS WITH GUNS N' ROSES AT THE START OF THEIR CAREER?

"I'd started Jetboy with [guitarist] Fernie Rod when I was 17 and we were part of the San Francisco club scene. A good friend of ours from that time was really into W.A.S.P. and she'd go to see them down in LA. They played a gig at the Troubadour in LA in '83 and Fernie and I tagged along for the ride. When we arrived at the club we noticed that there was a guy standing outside who had a look that matched the kind of stuff we were wearing; the creepers and the long coats. It was kind of a cross between glam, rockabilly and punk rock, sort of a long-haired version of Generation X. Anyway, we got talking to this guy and he turned out to be Izzy Stradlin. I seem to remember that Axl was there that night too. They were in Hollywood Rose at the time."

SO YOU IMMEDIATELY FELT A CONNECTION...

"Definitely. It turned out that those guys liked a lot of the same stuff we did. Fern and I had both discovered Hanoi Rocks by this point. I was a huge fan of Girl, The Lords Of The New Church, Japan... Of the American bands, Kix were a massive influence. And then there was the punk stuff like The Clash and Sigue Sigue Sputnik."

YOUR TASTE WAS WELL OUTSIDE WHAT WE MIGHT CALL TRADITIONAL METAL, THEN...

"Well I'd come from the metal scene via Mötley Crüe and

"NOBODY TALKED ABOUT BEING THE BIGGEST BAND ON THE PLANET!"

Photos: Getty Images/Marc S Canter/Michael Ochs Archive; IconicPix/William Hames

other stuff I'd found out about in *Kerrang!* But I think all of us – me, Fern, Izzy, Axl and [Hollywood Rose guitarist] Chris Weber – were into that underground glam stuff."

SO HOW DID YOUR FRIENDSHIP DEVELOP?

"That very same weekend when we first met Izzy and Axl, we went up to Chris Weber's parents' house and hung out together. It seemed like we all got along, so we stayed in touch. Whenever we came down from San Francisco we'd get together."

SO WHAT WAS HAPPENING MUSICALLY AT THIS POINT?

"Well, Hollywood Rose was in transition, with various people coming in and out of the group. They were playing around town and we already had Jetboy up and running as a band, so we had an idea to do some shows together."

BUT THAT DIDN'T HAPPEN...

"It didn't. I don't think Hollywood Rose played too many shows. The band at that time was Izzy, Axl, Chris, and a bass player and drummer I only vaguely remember. But there was a definite camaraderie between us. We were all really passionate about the music we were into, though nobody sat around at night talking about being the biggest band on the planet."

SO WHO WAS COMING THROUGH ON THE EMERGING SUNSET STRIP SCENE AT THAT TIME?

"When things first started happening in 1985 I guess it was Jetboy, Guns N' Roses [who first formed in March ►

of 1985], LA Guns and Faster Pussycat. Poison were in the mix too, but they were a little bit ahead of the pack, because they were already packing the clubs when we were starting out."

ONCE YOU GOT TO KNOW IZZY AND AXL A LITTLE BIT, HOW DID YOU FIND THEM AS PEOPLE?

"Izzy and I hit it off really well. We were both pretty laid-back, but we both had a real determination to drive our bands forward. Izzy was super low key, but he was a real rock fan. Axl was a very normal guy at this point. He was a mellow dude in a lot of ways. I didn't see the difficult side of him at that point. I remember bumping into Axl in the bar area at the Troubadour one time and he handed me a flyer. He said, 'We've got a new band, Guns N' Roses, and we should do some shows together.'"

"AXL WAS A VERY NORMAL GUY AT THIS POINT. HE WAS A MELLOW DUDE IN A LOT OF WAYS. I DIDN'T SEE THE DIFFICULT SIDE OF HIM."

SO WHEN DID YOU NOTICE THAT THE INDUSTRY WAS STARTING TO TAKE AN INTEREST IN WHAT WAS HAPPENING DOWN ON THE STRIP?

"That would be when we got our first manager. Bridget Wright worked in the publishing department at Warners, had a real passion for music and was hip to the scene. When she got involved, that was when things really started to change for us. We signed with Bridget in late '84 or early '85, and played our second LA show alongside Guns N' Roses at the Troubadour in mid-'85. Neither of us was headlining, though. A band called The Joneses were top of the bill. But after that we started playing LA *a lot*."

WHAT DO YOU REMEMBER OF GUNS N' ROSES AT THAT FIRST SHOW YOU DID TOGETHER?

"Well by that time the band had settled down with what you'd call the 'classic' line-up – [drummer] Steven [Adler] and [guitarist] Slash were on board. I watched the soundcheck before that show and remember thinking that the guys had some magic going on. Well, actually, it was kind of like magic mixed with a train wreck, because like us, they didn't really know what they were doing. We were all pretty decent players, but we were also trying to figure things out at the same time. There was a certain sloppiness about Guns N' Roses that was very charming."

SLOPPINESS?

"Well it wasn't *super* sloppy, but it was loose and it was raw and it was very street, very much going up against what was mainstream at the time, not giving a sh*t about having to sound a certain way to be on the radio. That's what Hanoi Rocks was all about and in the same way we were all middle fingering it to everybody. It felt like things were coming from a very pure place. There was a punk rock element to both Guns and Jetboy, and to my mind that's what made the whole thing unique, that's what made the whole thing work. [Jetboy vocalist] Mickey [Finn] was a hardcore punk. He and Axl were into the same raw stuff, so there was a connection and a bond between them. They talked a lot. I'm not saying Axl stole the idea from Mick, but Mick did wear fringed, assless chaps at the time..."

WHAT DID YOU THINK OF THE QUALITY OF THE GUNS MATERIAL AT THIS POINT?

"To be honest I was more impressed by the fact that they did a Rose Tattoo song ['Nice Boys'] than I was by their own stuff. You didn't hear anyone else doing that kind of material. We did more shows with Guns N' Roses than we did with anyone else at that stage. They even came up to San Francisco to play a show with us at The Stone in '85, maybe '86. I think that was the only time they ever did that."

SO AT WHAT POINT DID RECORD COMPANY INTEREST GET SERIOUS?

"I guess it was toward the end of '85 when things started to move. People started to sniff around, because we all started packing out the Roxy and the Troubadour. Poison was the first band to get a deal, which I think was in early '86. Then it was Guns [in March of 1986]. It all happened pretty quickly. They had a manager [Arnold Stiefel] who was also managing Rod Stewart at the time, and they got the use of a house on Normandie Avenue. We'd go and hang out there with them. It was a nice house, but it had nothing in it! I believe all the guys were living there. Maybe Axl wasn't.

"Then Jetboy got signed to Elektra by a guy called Steve Pross. Everything happened within the space of a few months. After that Faster Pussycat and L.A. Guns got their chance as well."

WAS IT WEIRD SUDDENLY HAVING SOME MONEY AFTER LIVING HAND TO MOUTH?

"Nobody had any money before the deals happened. But when we first moved to LA in November of '86 after we'd been signed, everyone got a minimal allowance. We stayed at a motel on Vine. It was a completely sleazy, drug-infested place, but it was two blocks from where we rehearsed. We'd share beds – two members per bed.

It wasn't so bad, though, because we went out every night to some house party or other. I can remember seeing Guns playing at one of those. Everyone would be crammed into a place and some band or other would start playing. But that stuff was just normal."

DID THE DYNAMIC BETWEEN THE BANDS CHANGE ONCE THE MUSIC BUSINESS TOOK A HOLD?

"It did. Everybody started making their albums in '87 and that year turned out to be a whole other game."

WHY'S THAT?

"Well the big thing for Jetboy was that we were having issues with [bass player] Todd [Crew]. In January of '87 we were working on new songs and meeting potential producers for our first album. We heard from one producer that our bass player needed some work, plus Todd's alcohol intake was super high at this point. There were drugs involved too. It felt like the band was splintering, but we were trying to fix it. Todd was going down the wrong path and we talked to the Guns guys about needing to get him some help. But they didn't really understand. They were a functioning band, even with all the drug and alcohol abuse that was going on. But it was getting so that we *weren't* functioning as a band, and I don't think they got that."

Jetboy photographed in Hollywood, 1988. L-R: Billy Rowe (guitar), Ron Tostenson (drums), Mickey Finn (vocals), Fernie Rod (guitar), Sami Yaffa (bass)

"GUNS WERE A FUNCTIONING BAND, EVEN WITH ALL THE DRUG AND ALCOHOL ABUSE. BUT IT WAS GETTING SO THAT JETBOY *WASN'T* FUNCTIONING AS A BAND."

SO GUNS N' ROSES COULD STILL OPERATE ON DRUGS, RIGHT?

"*They* could operate, but we'd go to rehearsals and we really couldn't. We needed to do something about it. Our manager Bridget spoke to the Guns guys, but we decided we needed to fire Todd around May or June of 1987. We brought in Sami Yaffa from Hanoi Rocks, but from that point on there was no relationship between the two bands.

"Duff said Guns were really pissed at Jetboy because we'd fired Todd, who was a friend of theirs. There was animosity, kinda like, 'How could you do this to Todd?' The core of that animosity seemed to come from Duff and Slash. I don't remember Izzy having any part of it. And while Axl has vocalised about all this in videos and stuff since, I don't really remember him being so concerned about Todd, or chummy-chummy with Todd at the time. Maybe I'm wrong about that, though. I wasn't there all the time... Of course the irony of it all is that within a couple of years Guns were having exactly the same problems with Steven and they had to fire him."

AND THINGS WENT DOWNHILL BETWEEN THE TWO BANDS PRETTY FAST?

"They did. We were avoiding each other, there was bad energy and things were uncomfortable. We couldn't talk like we used to. While we were mixing our debut album in Florida, Todd died [aged 21, on 18 July 1987, of a drug overdose in Slash's New York hotel room]. After that whole episode things were never really the same. Then pretty soon afterwards 'Appetite For Destruction' came out [21 July 1987], Guns N' Roses were on their way and obviously weren't hanging around town as much. "

DOES THAT MEAN YOU NEVER REALLY GOT TO SORT THINGS OUT WITH THE GUYS IN GUNS N' ROSES?

"Not really. By 1991 Guns were the biggest thing in the world. Meanwhile Jetboy had been dropped by Elektra and we'd moved back to San Francisco.

"Guns were playing at the Shoreline [in SF] with Skid Row opening. We were friends with those guys and went to the show to hang out with them. So we're in the backstage area and Axl walks by. Our singer Mick says, 'Hey Axl, what's going on?' But Axl didn't stop. He just started walking faster to get away.

"Now someone must have said something to [Skid Row bassist] Rachel [Bolan], because a few minutes later he came up to Mick and me and said, 'Sorry, but we've got to get you guys out of here.' We had to leave the backstage area.

"The very next day we were hanging with Rachel and some other folk in a record store. My sister suddenly noticed that Izzy was in there too. I started to walk out the door, but Izzy called my name, came up to me and apologised for what had happened the night before. He said, 'I want you to know I had nothing to do with that, and if you want to come to the show tonight as my guests I'll make sure everything's OK.'

"He left me the name of his hotel and his room number, but I called later and told him I was going to pass. And that was the last time I saw Izzy. That day I can remember thinking to myself, 'That dude's done with this sh*t. This isn't what he signed up for and he's going to split.' Soon afterwards he was gone."

A LOT OF WATER HAS FLOWED UNDER THE BRIDGE SINCE THEN, OF COURSE, AND JETBOY ARE BACK WITH A NEW ALBUM DUE EARLY NEXT YEAR. DO YOU WISH YOU COULD GET BACK TO HOW THINGS USED TO BE BETWEEN YOU GUYS AND GUNS N' ROSES?

"Of course I do. It's just too bad that things ended up that way. It would be nice if we could all share some fond memories, especially of Todd, instead of hashing up misery. I said to Fern the other day, the way the world's connected now and with a new Jetboy record coming out, maybe we could do something together. It would be amazing to do a show or something. But to be honest, what would be even more amazing would be for us all to be able to sit in a room together again and laugh about the old days!"

Photos: Mark 'Weissguy' Weiss; IconicPix/William Hames

Guns N' Roses taking it to the people at a UCLA frat party, Los Angeles, 21 July 1985. Note Axl's ass-less chaps

"THEY WEREN'T SUPER POLISHED!"

L.A. GUNS GUITARIST **MICK CRIPPS** SAW THE EARLIEST DAYS OF **GUNS N' ROSES** FROM CLOSE AT HAND. HE TELLS *JON HOTTEN* EXACTLY WHY THE BAND STOOD OUT FROM THE SUNSET STRIP CROWD…

GUITARIST AND KEYBOARDIST MICK *Cripps was born in Adelaide, Australia on 28 September 1962. An aspiring musician, he lived in London in the early '80s before moving permanently to Los Angeles in 1985. Two of the local LA scene bands, L.A. Guns and Hollywood Rose, had joined forces to become Guns N' Roses that same year. But when the liaison didn't work out, original L.A. Guns guitarist Tracii Guns left the group to reform that band. Cripps originally came on board as a bassist alongside drummer Nickey 'Beat' Alexander. The line-up was soon completed by guitarist and vocalist Robert Stoddard and singer Paul Black. The group's personnel eventually stabilised around Guns, Cripps (now on guitar), Alexander, bassist Kelly Nickels, and vocalist Phil Lewis, and the band went on to record a number of successful hard rock albums including 1988's 'L.A. Guns', 'Cocked And Loaded' from 1989, and 1991's 'Hollywood Vampires'. Today Cripps is a member of The Brutalists alongside former Quireboys bassist Nigel Mogg, the nephew of UFO vocalist Phil Mogg.*

HOW DID YOU END UP IN LA AT THE TIME OF THE SUNSET STRIP ROCK REVOLUTION, MICK?

"I was bouncing around London for two, three, maybe four years, going out and seeing bands like The Dogs D'Amour, Johnny Thunders, that sort of scene. I'm talking maybe 1983 to 1985 here. I actually ended up going to LA because my mom and dad were living out there at the time. I sort of fell in with this guy called Nickey Beat from a punk band called The Weirdos and a pal called Stevo from another punk band, The Vandals. Nickey had a rehearsal studio out in Silver Lake called The Love Palace, and all of the groups from LA that weren't what you'd call typical Sunset Strip bands – the likes of Tex & The Horseheads and The Cramps – used to rehearse there. Well I was hanging out with Nickey and Stevo, and then this band Guns N' Roses started rehearsing at The Love Palace."

> "I LIKED THEM AND I HAVE PRETTY GOOD TASTE… BUT NOBODY THOUGHT THEY WERE GONNA GO, LIKE, 20 MILLION SALES!"

SO WHAT WERE THEY LIKE?

"They were sort of hanging with this punk rock crowd, or whatever label you want to put on it. They were rehearsing in a tiny little room, so Axl would stand outside because it was so loud inside. He'd actually stand outside to sing! I'd watch him and I could tell he was very into it. His voice was loud enough for the band to hear just with the bleed coming through the wall."

DID YOU KNOW THE GUNS GUYS WELL?

"By that time, Tracii [Guns] was around. He'd just been

replaced by Slash in Guns N' Roses. I remember that Nickey introduced me to Duff and we'd hang out. So I suppose I was around when they were just starting to do the first couple of Guns N' Roses shows with Slash in the band, around the summer of 1985. I remember that we went down to see them play a frat party at UCLA in one of the f*cking dorms! I'm thinking, 'These guys are going to get killed by the jocks...' But Axl was walking around this frat house, cool as you like, and there was a grand piano. He had leather chaps on with his bare ass hanging out, and I was thinking, 'Oh, he's not going to do this, is he...?' But he sat down at this expensive piano and started playing 'November Rain'. I thought that was hilarious."

Tracii Guns and Axl performing together at the Troubadour in L.A. Guns, 13 October 1984

DID GUNS GET THEMSELVES A FOLLOWING ON THE LA SCENE PRETTY QUICKLY?

"Well, the Sunset Strip scene was very heavy metal at that point, certainly compared to what I'd been used to England. W.A.S.P. had come over to London, I think they played at the Lyceum, and I was like, 'What the f*ck is happening in LA?!' It was a little bit Kiss-like, if you know what I mean, a little bit over the top. But what I liked about Guns N' Roses was that they weren't like that. They were certainly a part of that scene. They were playing the Whisky A Go Go and that kind of crowd liked them, but they weren't super polished. They had rough edges. A lot of the other bands were very formulaic. Guns N' Roses had this kind of English look going – well, it was the New York look really – and that was very cool. They were very good players and Axl definitely had a voice."

L.A. Guns photographed during the '80s Sunset Strip era. L-R: Mick Cripps (guitar and keyboards), Kelly Nickels (bass), Tracii Guns (guitar), Phil Lewis (vocals), Steve Riley (drums)

AND THEN YOU BECAME A PART OF L.A. GUNS?

"Tracii and I got things going, and we kept the name [from the band's early incarnation] because Tracii had all these posters. That's the only reason we kept the name! He had these L.A. Guns posters from when Axl was in the band, so we figured, 'well f*ck, at least we'll be able to get some gigs, and then we'll change the name.'"

WHAT DID TRACII TELL YOU ABOUT HIS TIME IN THE BAND WITH AXL?

"You know what? We never really talked about it. That's bands for you. I think it's best for him to say, really..."

PRESUMABLY THINGS WERE VERY HEDONISTIC ON THE STRIP AT THAT TIME...

"I'd come from London, where it was all about going to the pub, having a pint and somebody *might* have some gear. But it was rare. Cocaine and stuff like that... you had to go into the deep underground to get that, and even then it was sulphate... But in LA it was bags of weed and f*cking drugs *everywhere*. There were a lot of lost people, endless streams of wasted, lost, weird, psychotic people. Lots of strip clubs, lots of women into that scene. The accessibility to seediness and drug culture was much more prevalent than it had been in London."

WHEN THE SUNSET STRIP SCENE SUDDENLY BECAME IMPORTANT MUSICALLY, WAS IT A REAL FEEDING FRENZY FOR MAJOR RECORD COMPANIES?

"Guns N' Roses were the ones that all of the record companies were looking at. They weren't all sure, but they were all looking. And then within about three weeks Jane's Addiction and Guns N' Roses got signed. And then L.A. Guns got signed. The connection definitely paid off for us. I suppose within eight or nine months everyone was working on their records and then we all hit the road. And within about a year of that Guns N' Roses became massive."

WHAT WAS THAT LIKE TO WITNESS?

"Well, it just exploded. They got the record deal and they were gone. It was way out in the stratosphere. I knew they were gonna do well. Why? Because I liked them and I have pretty good taste... But you know, I thought they would probably go platinum. Nobody thought they were gonna go, like, 20 million sales! You have to imagine the surprise and fascination of seeing that happen to people you know and that you worked with on some level. All of a sudden your expectations are exceeded about a million times."

DID GUNS N' ROSES' SUCCESS MAKE IT EASIER OR MORE DIFFICULT FOR L.A. GUNS?

"Both. It's a good question. It was beneficial because the way record companies operate, they're gonna go after the second stringers and all that. Of course that helped us to get a major record deal, and that meant that people liked us on a different level. The first L.A. Guns album did maybe 900,000, and then we went platinum with the next one, so we had a good career out of it. And Phil and Tracii are *still* having a good career out of it. So it had to be beneficial being associated with Guns N' Roses. But we were never gonna match them. You're always gonna be a small part of someone else's legacy."

Photos: Getty Images/Marc S Canter/Michael Ochs Archives; Getty Images/Ebet Roberts/Redferns

G N' R – LIFE AND DEATH ON SUNSET

"A bunch of kids with loads of cool attitude who were definitely up for living the rock star dream to the full"

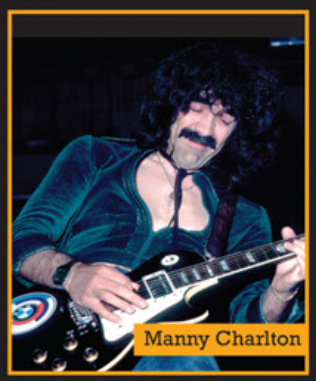
THERE WAS A REAL ATTITUDE IN THE MUSIC

*FORMER **NAZARETH** GUITARIST **MANNY CHARLTON** LIFTS THE LID ON THE INFAMOUS **GUNS N' ROSES** SOUND CITY RECORDING SESSIONS FROM 1986 THAT HE DIRECTED...*

BACK IN 1986, SCOTTISH *band Nazareth's guitarist Manny Charlton was one of several producers that record label Geffen were looking at with a view to working with Guns N' Roses on their debut album. Charlton was under such serious consideration that he was asked to produce demos for the fledgling band at Sound City Studios in LA during June of that year. The idea was that if the sessions worked out, then Charlton would take the producer's chair for what would become the band's debut album, 1987's 'Appetite For Destruction'. Those recordings were hidden from the public for more than 30 years, but finally surfaced officially for the first time on the expanded deluxe edition of 'Appetite...' that was released in June of this year. Charlton left Nazareth in 1990 and is still playing today, as well as working as a respected producer. He was happy to talk to* Rock Candy Mag *about his experiences working with 'The Most Dangerous Band In The World'.*

HOW DID YOU FIRST GET ASKED TO PRODUCE DEMOS FOR GUNS N' ROSES, MANNY?

"It was all pretty simple, really. Tom Zutaut, who was Guns N' Roses' A&R guy at Geffen Records at the time, called me up and asked if I might be interested in working on some early recordings with them."



Manny Charlton

WERE YOU AT ALL AWARE OF THE BAND AT THIS POINT IN TIME?

"I can't say that I was, no. You have to understand that they'd only just been signed to a major record label, so they were pretty much unknown at that point."

HOW DID THE PROCESS GET UNDERWAY? WERE YOU SENT ANY MUSIC TO LISTEN TO?

"Tom sent me some soundboard mixes of the band playing live, though I don't remember if he told me where the show had been recorded. To be honest the sound wasn't the best, so I didn't learn very much about what the group's potential was, how good they were, or how good they might potentially be. But it was all they had at the time."

Duff, Axl and Slash getting seriously attitudinal at the Los Angeles Street Scene Festival, 28 September 1985

What I did was more a case of simply recording them. I believe I did something like 12 songs that way. I can remember quite a lot of the tunes we recorded together. They included 'Welcome To The Jungle', 'Paradise City', 'November Rain', 'My Michelle', 'Move To The City', 'Shadow Of Your Love', 'Reckless Life' and a cover of the Rose Tattoo song 'Nice Boys (Don't Play Rock 'N' Roll)'... tracks that fans will know really well, of course. But there was one song they didn't have at that point – and that was 'Sweet Child O'Mine'."

SO THE BAND ALREADY HAD 'NOVEMBER RAIN' BY THEN?
"They did. But even at that stage Axl told me the song was going to be held back for the second album. I could tell, though, that it was going to be great."

SO WHAT MADE YOU WANT TO WORK WITH THEM?
"Well, I have to say that despite the poor quality of those live recordings, I could tell there were one or two songs in the band's repertoire that were pretty good. 'Welcome To The Jungle' really stood out for me as a great number. But above all, I sensed that there was a real attitude that came through in the music. That was important to me."

DID YOU KNOW THAT SOME OF THE GUYS WERE BIG NAZARETH FANS?
"Absolutely. That was the reason I was there. Apparently, the band liked the way the Nazareth album [1975's] 'Hair Of The Dog' sounded, and I'd produced that. Axl was also a massive fan of [Nazareth singer] Dan McCafferty's vocals. Guns N' Roses even ended up covering the song 'Hair Of The Dog' song on their [1993] 'The Spaghetti Incident?' album."

DID YOU GET TO SEE GUNS LIVE BEFORE STARTING WORK WITH THEM?
"Ha, there's a bit of a story here. Tom and I went down to a rehearsal room in LA to see them play one time, but the band didn't show up for some reason or other! At the time I was not at all amused by having my time wasted!"

OBVIOUSLY YOU GAVE GUNS ANOTHER SHOT, THOUGH. ONCE YOU MET THE BAND MEMBERS, HOW DID YOU GET ON WITH THEM?
"I got along pretty well with all of them. To be honest, they came across as a bunch of kids with loads of cool attitude who were definitely up for living the rock star dream to the full. What I also remember is that even in those early days there was no doubt that Axl was the main man, the one in control of it all."

SO HOW DID THE PROCESS WORK?
"Because the cassettes I'd been given were of such poor quality, my idea was to take the band into a decent studio – Sound City in Van Nuys – and record their live set straight to stereo. That way I'd be able to get a handle on the songs and get some ideas into my head about the way they should sound when recorded properly."

HOW MANY SONGS DID YOU PRODUCE IN THE END?
"Well, I wouldn't say that I actually *produced* the band.

> "WHAT YOU HEAR IS GENUINELY THE WAY THE BAND PLAYED IN THE STUDIO."

HOW MANY DAYS WERE YOU ALL IN THE STUDIO?
"Just two days in early June. But given the way we worked that was all the time we needed."

DID YOU MAKE ANY ALTERATIONS TO THE SONGS OR THE ARRANGEMENTS IN THE STUDIO?
"No. I just let the guys play everything live the way they wanted. We didn't put on any overdubs. So what you hear is genuinely the way the band played in the studio."

WHAT DID YOU THINK OF SLASH AND IZZY AS GUITARISTS?
"They were both great. I have to say, the way they complemented each other reminded me of the way Joe Perry and Brad Whitford interacted in Aerosmith. It was a special bond, which you can hear in the music."

DID YOU PLAY ANYTHING YOURSELF ON THE DEMOS?
"No. There was no need for me to get involved at that level. The guys had it all covered."

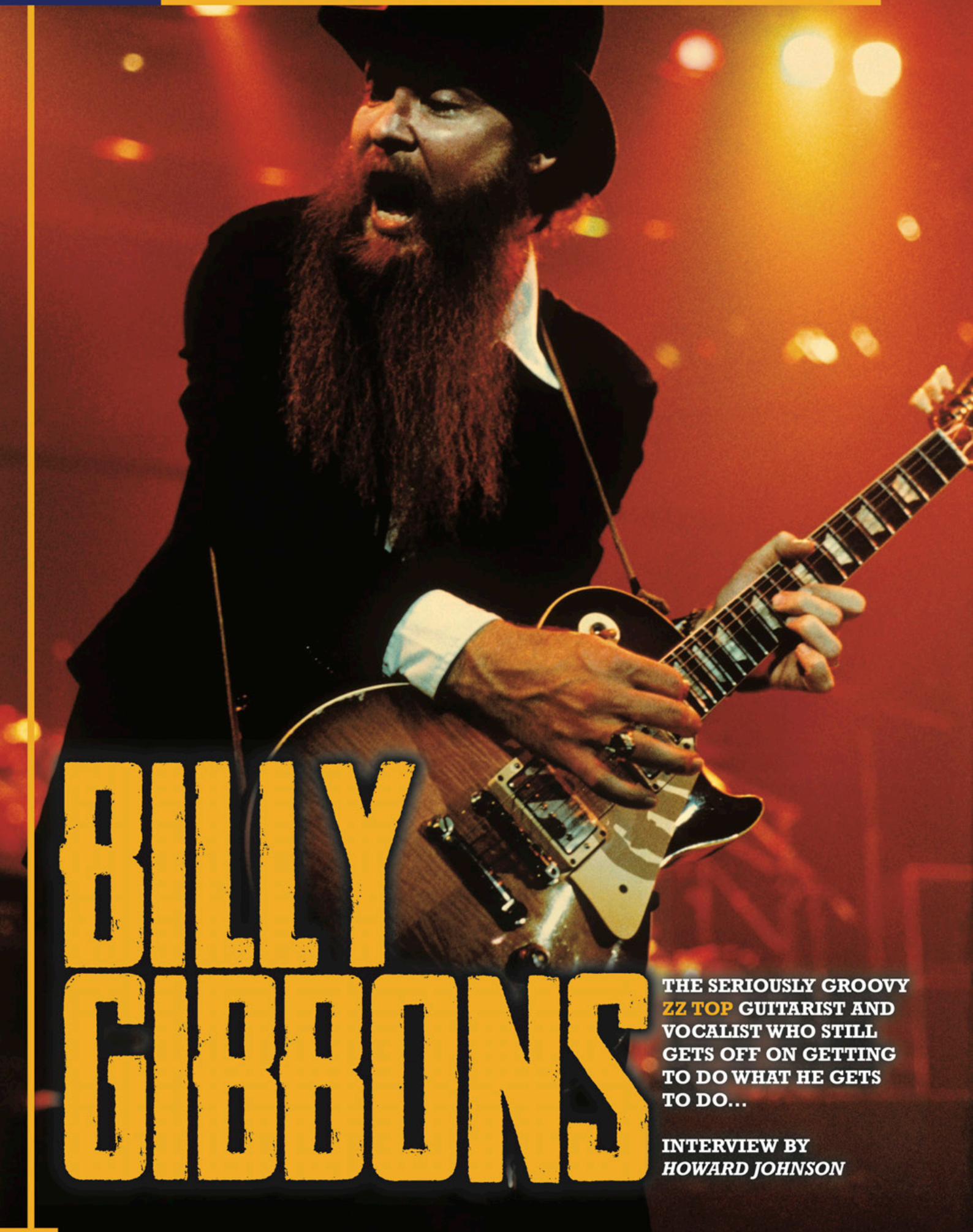
YOU MENTIONED THAT AXL WAS IN CHARGE. HOW EASY WAS HE TO WORK WITH?
"Axl was a total pro. Certainly there was no sign of any prima donna attitude from him."

HOW MUCH DID YOU GET PAID FOR YOUR WORK ON THESE DEMOS?
"Well, a grand total of... nothing! Seriously, I never got paid anything."

WOW! DID YOU LOOK AT RECORDING WITH THE BAND AS SOME KIND OF AUDITION FOR THE PRODUCER'S SLOT ON THE ALBUM?
"When I look back now it was pretty obvious that I was being auditioned for that role, yes."

SO, WHY DIDN'T YOU FINALLY END UP PRODUCING 'APPETITE FOR DESTRUCTION'?
"I was never actually asked to do it. After I'd recorded the band I had to go back to Scotland to finish up promo work and touring on a new Nazareth album [1986's 'Cinema']. I recall telling the guys that if we could get our respective schedules to coincide, then I'd love to work on the album. But that never happened, of course."

Photos: Mark 'Weissguy' Weiss; Getty Images/Paul Natkin; Getty Images/Marc S Canter/Michael Ochs Archives



BILLY GIBBONS

THE SERIOUSLY GROOVY ZZ TOP GUITARIST AND VOCALIST WHO STILL GETS OFF ON GETTING TO DO WHAT HE GETS TO DO...

INTERVIEW BY ***HOWARD JOHNSON***

OPENING UP FOR JIMI HENDRIX IN 1968

"I got to know of the Jimi Hendrix Experience through the release of the first LP [1967's 'Are You Experienced']. When the invitation came to team up for some shows with my band at the time, The Moving Sidewalks, I jumped at the chance! Now the contract called for a 45-minute delivery from The Moving Sidewalks, and to fulfil that we decided to include two Jimi Hendrix songs that we'd learned. I remember the first night, as we were nearing the close of the set, we popped in our versions of 'Foxy Lady' and 'Purple Haze'. I looked to the side of the stage and there was Jimi with his arms folded – but he was smiling! Upon exiting the stage he tapped me on the shoulder and said 'I like you. You gotta lotta nerve!' That gave me a sense of release and that continued on as we went from city to city. Jimi would always organise two hotel rooms at the end of the hall for both of us, one room across from the other. He insisted we both keep the doors open until it was time to crash. He directed the delivery of a record player each afternoon and I'd tiptoe into his room to listen. We became friends that way. A few months later when we were listening to Jeff Beck's 'Truth' album together, he leant over and said to me, 'How do you think Jeff did that?' All I could do was lean back a little bit and say, 'Jimi, there's no doubt that Jeff is listening to your record and saying the same thing.'"

ZZ Top photographed on 8 February 1984 in Chicago. L-R: Dusty Hill (bass and vocals), Frank Beard (drums), Billy Gibbons (guitar and vocals)

"OUR BEARDS, WHICH LATER BECAME A TRADEMARK, STARTED OUT THANKS TO ONE SIMPLE WORD – LAZINESS. NOWADAYS I SEE SOME REALLY CAREFULLY GROOMED BEARDS AND MOUSTACHES – AND THAT'S THE EXACT OPPOSITE OF LAZINESS!"

FAVOURITE ZZ TOP ALBUM

"Ooh, I would clump a couple of them in the same bucket. 'Tres Hombres' came early on [in 1973] and that brought about our first chart hit with the song 'La Grange'. We still manage to squeeze that one in the set. Then fast forward to 1996 and you get to 'Rhythmeen'. My two partners, Frank and Dusty, treasure that work, as do I. It's the first pure trio recording. A lot of the previous ZZ Top recordings contained a lot of overdubs. To hear ZZ Top on those records, you're hearing a multi-piece outfit. But 'Rhythmeen' was a lean machine with just the three of us laying it down. From the ZZ Top catalogue, those are my two personal highlights."

CHICKEN RANCH BROTHEL

"Back in the day a trip to visit The Chicken Ranch was an unofficial rite of passage. The mystique of the existence of such a place in what was usually a rather conservative outpost, that being the state of Texas, was... I dunno... something one had to do. Though that statement is very much followed by the phrase 'back in the day'! At the time we were recording the song about that establishment – 'La Grange' – we were still in our early 20s, and as Muddy Waters used to say, 'Get on out there while you're young. Write it like you feel it and play it like you feel it.' Let me put it this way. When you come out of your teens and into your early 20s there's a lot of mirth that surrounds what you do on a day-to-day basis. There was no shortage of being a little cheeky at that juncture. It's pretty safe to assume we've all been there."

BAND MANAGER AND PRODUCER BILL HAM

"You've got to hand it to a guy who was musically inclined and willing to take on the challenge of corralling three renegade characters and then make it into something meaningful. The challenge says a lot about Bill's stamina, and with his expertise and guidance and execution there's still a lingering sense of awe about him managing to do what he managed to do. He's well remembered."

YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH BANDMATES DUSTY HILL AND FRANK BEARD

"One key ingredient in keeping our relationship together is always staying on our toes, because we never know what's going to take us into that mysterious land of uncharted waters. When we're performing, either on stage or in the studio, and someone takes an unexpected left turn, we call it 'going to the Bahamas'. We know how to get there, but the key is, can we ever get back? That's where the excitement is, sure enough. But there's one more element to the equation of our relationship, and we hold it quite near and dear. And that is always travelling on separate buses!"

BLUES MUSIC

"There's a feeling we would all do well to get in touch with that resides way, way down in the soul. I think we all have it. Presently, the blues as an art form serves as a channel to get in and touch that feeling. I use the term 'art form' because the blues has a peculiar resonance around the globe. It's no longer just something performed or committed to a recording to be left behind. As the saying goes, the blues gets rediscovered about once every 10 years. There's some magic to the formula and that's really fascinating. My latest ►

Photos: Getty Images/Lorne Resnick/Redferns; Getty Images/Paul Natkin

RAPID FIRE RECALL

There was a Billy before there was a beard. Playing live with ZZ Top at the Chattanooga Municipal Auditorium, October 1973

interpretation of the blues is my album 'The Big Bad Blues' – and I think the key word here is 'interpretation'. The originators, by and large, might be long gone, but the statement is still there. And fortunately there's a wealth of recordings that allow the blues to be experienced repeatedly. From that, we can then do our best to emulate what was invented way back when and move it forward. The art form itself has been stretched in just about every direction there is, and that adds to the magic and the mystique of what most might call just three simple chords. But there's a sophistication and complexity behind it, and that can be mind-boggling. I find myself listening to records I've had for many years, and with each playback something still manages to jump up that has not been heard before. The blues is a real elastic art form, I'll tell you..."

'THE BIG BAD BLUES' ALBUM

"I like the natural way it unfolded. Passing through town was the drummer Mr Greg Morrow, who originates from Memphis, Tennessee. We decided to host a little jam session and kicked it off by playing a few of our favourite blues tunes. After a couple of days the engineer, Joe Hardy, said, 'Would you like to hear what you've been doing?' I said 'How's that?' and he said, 'Oh, I didn't tell you, but I've had the tape rolling the entire time.' It was a strictly off-the-cuff get together, but it gave us the touchstone to carry on and make an album. The whole thing excited me, so I got busy with pencil and paper, scribbled out some things. When we got it done everyone felt it had happened in a very positive manner. And if you play the album loud, it really gets exciting."

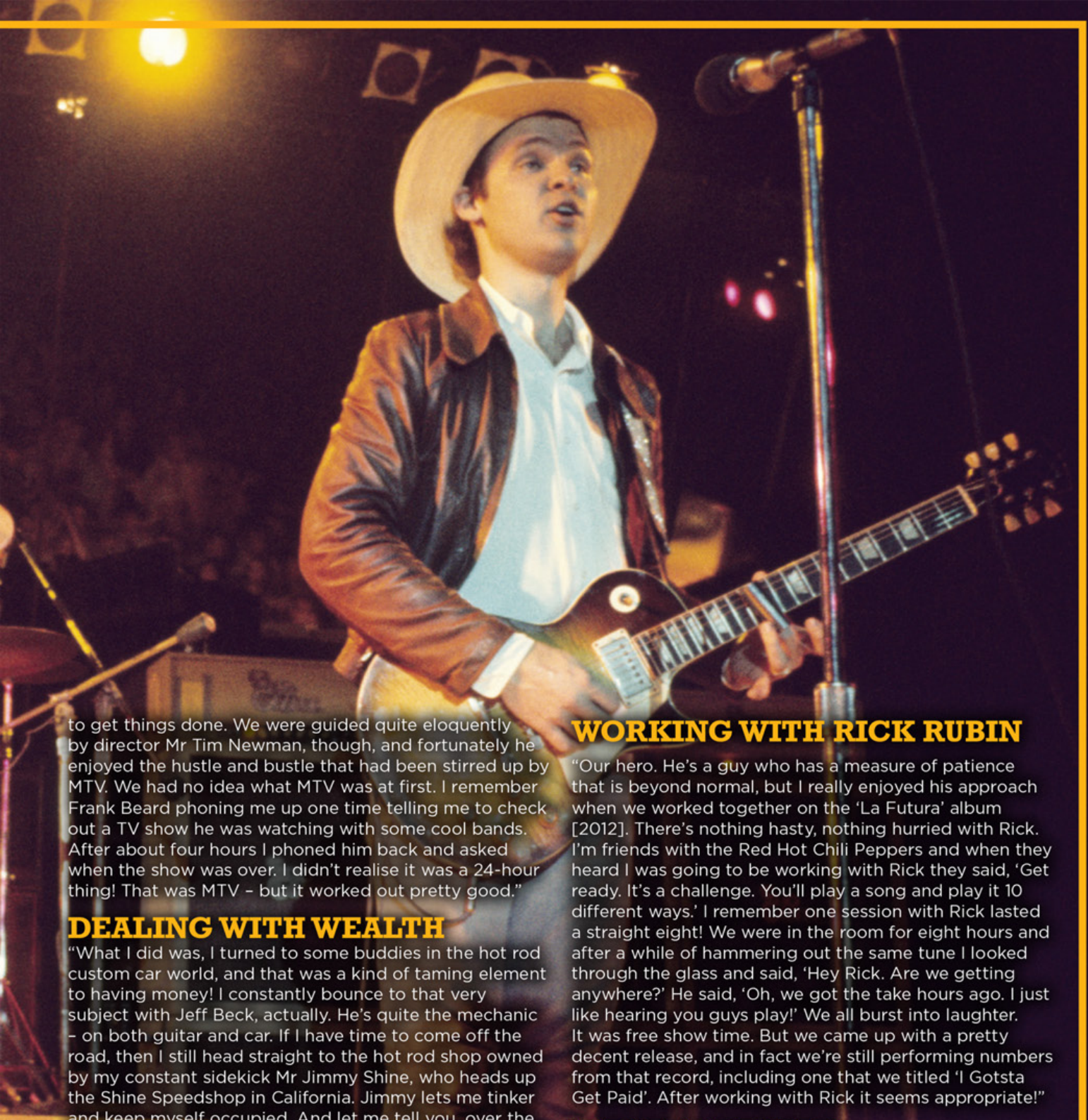
THE SUCCESS OF 'ELIMINATOR'

"It changed a lot of things. What was interesting was that at that time we started eliminating some important elements in the way we approached and looked at the recording studio. Tuning and timing became identified as of paramount importance. It seems rather simplistic to boil it down to just two key elements, but if you combine those two – tuning and timing – with a really good song, then you've got a chance of sharing the moment with any number of people. So we took that approach, and I think it's no secret that we were allowed to start experimenting with all these new gadgets that were coming into the studio at the time. In the early '80s synthesizers of all sorts started to enter the market. I guess the good news is that we didn't start by reading the manual. We just started twisting knobs until it felt right. We were actually pleased with the results as they were going down, but the global success of 'Eliminator' was the real surprise, the real bonus. It didn't feel scarily huge, though, and I can say that the constant touring schedule kept us so busy and so focused that I don't think the reality of what was happening really sank in. We just kept on going, so it wasn't an issue. Looking back it could have been quite the fright, but you stay busy and you stay focused and you don't let it get to you... I think at the end of the day it comes back to the enjoyment of getting to do what we get to do."

THOSE ICONIC 'ELIMINATOR' VIDEOS

"There was no set way of doing videos, except that you had to tiptoe through 72 hours of non-stop work. Most of our early videos were done after hours. There was real uncertainty about video at record company level at the time. They didn't know what to make of it and they were by and large reluctant to throw any money at it. We used to start at six o'clock on a Friday afternoon after union hours were over and then went Saturday and Sunday, before pulling it to the kerb when the sun came up Monday morning. You only had a short window in which

Photo: Getty Images/Tom Hill/WireImage



to get things done. We were guided quite eloquently by director Mr Tim Newman, though, and fortunately he enjoyed the hustle and bustle that had been stirred up by MTV. We had no idea what MTV was at first. I remember Frank Beard phoning me up one time telling me to check out a TV show he was watching with some cool bands. After about four hours I phoned him back and asked when the show was over. I didn't realise it was a 24-hour thing! That was MTV – but it worked out pretty good."

DEALING WITH WEALTH

"What I did was, I turned to some buddies in the hot rod custom car world, and that was a kind of taming element to having money! I constantly bounce to that very subject with Jeff Beck, actually. He's quite the mechanic – on both guitar and car. If I have time to come off the road, then I still head straight to the hot rod shop owned by my constant sidekick Mr Jimmy Shine, who heads up the Shine Speedshop in California. Jimmy lets me tinker and keep myself occupied. And let me tell you, over the years hot rods and custom cars have been a really good money pit."

BEING IN THE ROCK & ROLL HALL OF FAME

"I think it's quite an honourable thing. There are so many past recipients who deserve the recognition. One of the highest cards we could hope to pull out was to be inducted by Keith Richards. I think you can find his speech out there. It's quite entertaining. But I also like the fact that there are millions more who probably *should* qualify to be inducted. You tiptoe out on a Friday or Saturday night and suddenly you're in front of someone who's really saying something, and you say, 'Gee whiz.' That's when you realise that it's quite something to be in there yourself."

WORKING WITH RICK RUBIN

"Our hero. He's a guy who has a measure of patience that is beyond normal, but I really enjoyed his approach when we worked together on the 'La Futura' album [2012]. There's nothing hasty, nothing hurried with Rick. I'm friends with the Red Hot Chili Peppers and when they heard I was going to be working with Rick they said, 'Get ready. It's a challenge. You'll play a song and play it 10 different ways.' I remember one session with Rick lasted a straight eight! We were in the room for eight hours and after a while of hammering out the same tune I looked through the glass and said, 'Hey Rick. Are we getting anywhere?' He said, 'Oh, we got the take hours ago. I just like hearing you guys play!' We all burst into laughter. It was free show time. But we came up with a pretty decent release, and in fact we're still performing numbers from that record, including one that we titled 'I Gotsta Get Paid'. After working with Rick it seems appropriate!"

HIPSTER BEARDS

"Beards are somewhat fashionable now, which is a little strange for me. Why? Because when we used to be walking through an airport people would clear the way, thinking we were either religious nuts or escapees from some Western movie set! I'd like to think I was a trendsetter. When you pair up ZZ Top and today's legion of hipsters I'm able to relate on the creative level. However, there's also an exact juxtaposition between ZZ Top and those guys. Our beards, which later became a trademark, started out thanks to one simple word – laziness. We'd taken a break from touring, we all went our separate ways for a while, and Dusty and I just disregarded the razor. Nowadays I see some really carefully groomed beards and moustaches – and that's the exact opposite of laziness. A lot of thought goes into that appearance. It's quite well refined."

HAPPY DAYS!

Promoter Bill Graham's **Day On The Green** festival in Oakland, California became one of the most iconic rock events in the world throughout the '70s and '80s. *John Nicholson* traces the history of a unique happening…

***"I remember at Day On The Green in 1974 the Grateful Dead were playing and there was this freaky guy climbing a huge pole. He might have actually been naked. I think he did it a lot. Must've brought his own pole along! He was really way up there too, like 20, 30 feet up. Loads of us watched as Bill Graham pleaded for him to come down while telling the crowd not to drink these huge gallon flagons of lemonade that were being passed around, because the lemonade was loaded with LSD. I stood there thinking, 'Wow, this isn't exactly the Reading Festival.' – Rock Candy* reader Doug Spencer**

THE DAY ON THE Green festivals began with a one-off show headlined by Leon Russell in 1973 and ran – on and off – until 1999. Until that last one-off show, they were always held at the Oakland Coliseum in California, home to both the Oakland Athletics baseball outfit and the Oakland Raiders American football team. In the 25-plus years that the festival existed, the event became one of the most iconic live music events in the world. And despite the fact that he, sadly, died in a helicopter crash in 1991, Day On The Green would always be associated with one man, the music promoter Bill Graham.

Graham had long since established his reputation as the king of the counter-culture concert. Between 1968 and 1971 his venues – New York's Fillmore East and San Francisco's Fillmore West – played host to pretty much every important rock band of the era, as well as jazz and blues legends. And yet by 1971 Graham was growing disillusioned with this type of business and wanted out.

Yngwie Malmsteen performing at Day On The Green, 31 August 1985

Photo: Gene Ambo

David Byrd, one of the artists who created the famous psychedelic Fillmore East posters, spoke to *Noisey* website about Graham's decision to move away from club gigs. "Bill said, 'I don't want to have to clean up vomit one more time.' He told me that the drugs had changed. From '68, the drugs were psychedelic, and by '70, '71 it was red wine and reds. The drug scenario changed. It made for a different audience and he was tired of it."

The peaceful atmosphere in the beginning was outlined by lawyer Bill Coblentz, whom Graham had contracted to help him with the Fillmore. "What impressed me about the place was how orderly it was. People were smoking dope, but they were well-behaved," said Coblentz in the book *Bill Graham Presents: My Life Inside Rock And Out* by Bill Graham and Robert Greenfield.

By 1971, however, accelerated use of cocaine meant that 'orderly' was the last word you'd use when describing behaviour in Graham's clubs. "The audience at Fillmore East was changing," said Graham. "They were becoming demanding rather than appreciative. Plus I was frustrated by people in the business not dealing with their new-found power in the way I felt they should."

In a 2014 radio interview, the musician David Crosby reflected on those days, and how cocaine had changed things for the worse. "Music is an elevating force," he said. "Cocaine and other hard drugs take everything down – the level of consciousness, the level of conception, the level of performance, the level of humanity, your ability to be empathetic, your energy, your spirit. All that sh*t gets dragged down."

UNCOVERED

Van Halen guitarist Eddie Van Halen and vocalist David Lee Roth perform in front of one of Day On The Green's remarkable backdrops

IN 1971 Graham closed both of his venues down. The Fillmores were culturally important and financially successful, but Graham felt the balance between the industry's two driving forces – music and money – was getting out of whack. Graham locked the doors, walked away from the venues and decided to concentrate on being a promoter. It's hard to see this as an entirely altruistic move, of course. A clever interpreter of social mores and trends, Graham had most likely seen music's future. As demand for the product grew ever greater, it was clear that future bucks would be made in bigger halls – even stadiums – and not in small clubs and theatres.

The infamous Woodstock Festival had taken place on 15-18 August 1969. Released the following year, the documentary film of this ground-breaking event had been playing to packed cinemas all over America. Graham actually makes a brief, controversial appearance in the film, discussing the invasion of people that made Woodstock something of a free-for-all rather than a tightly-controlled money-making operation for the bands and promoters. "When you have those man-eating Marabunta ants coming over the hill in South America, if they want to cut 'em off and then stop 'em from coming, they make a ditch," he said. "They put oil in the ditch, they make a flame. I'm not saying they should put up flames to stop the people. There has to be *some* way to stop the influx of humanity." In his book, Graham reflected on his appearance in the film. "Kids would come up to me at shows and say 'Hey! How could you want to boil me in oil?!' That story got me more hatred than anything."

> "ALL THE DAY ON THE GREEN SHOWS I WENT TO WERE REALLY GREAT. THE BANDS ALL INTERMINGLED AND YOU COULD JUST GO UP TO THEM AND HAVE A CHAT BEFORE THEY WENT ONSTAGE. IT WAS ALL VERY RELAXED. EVERYTHING SEEMED MUCH MORE OPEN BACK THEN."
> *ROCK CANDY* WRITER **XAVIER RUSSELL**

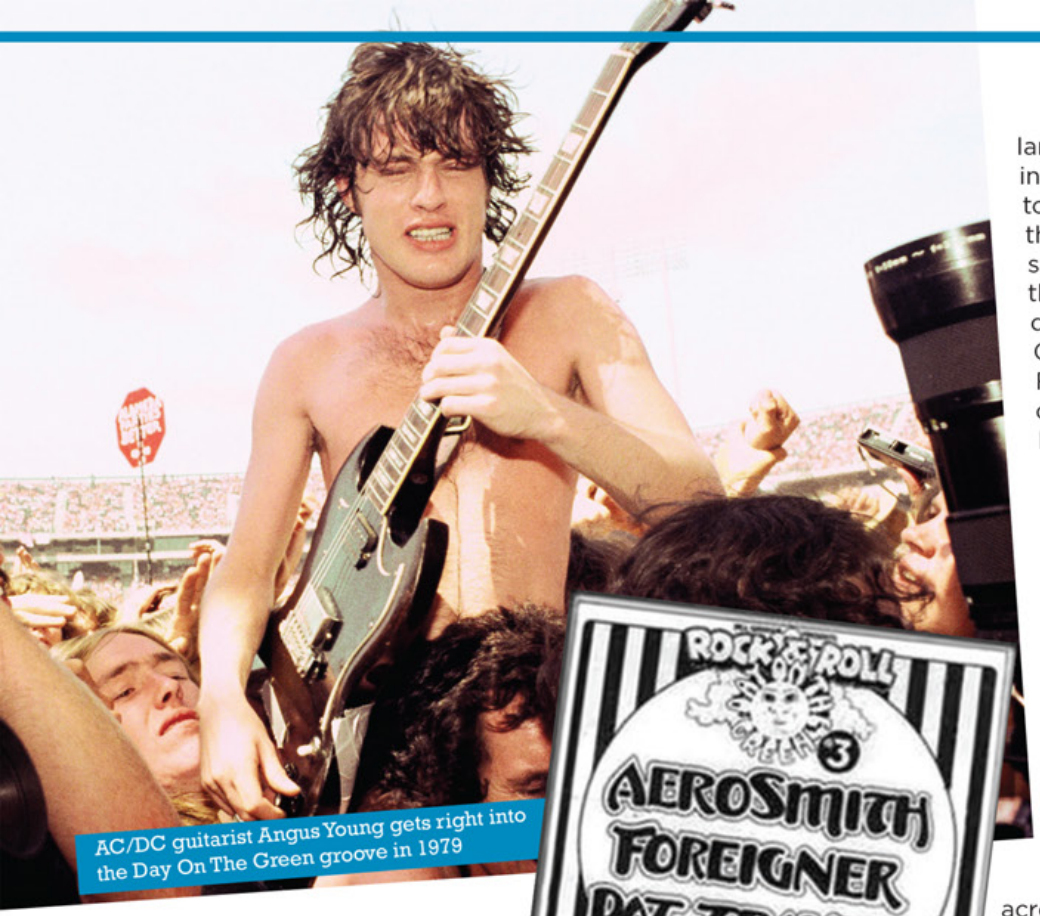
Graham wasn't a fan of Woodstock, but nonetheless used his influence to get his favourites, Santana – "the only band to headline the Fillmore without having made a record" – on stage at a good time. And what couldn't be denied was the fact that the film was helping to grow rock's audience, making stars of acts like Ten Years After. Lou Adler, who produced the Mamas And The Papas' hits in the '60s and co-founded Monterey Pop, said, "If Monterey made rock'n'roll an art form, Woodstock made it a business."

For all his love of music, Graham wasn't going to let the money train depart without him.

GIL FRIESEN, former president of A&M Records, spoke of those unique days in *Bill Graham Presents*: "Pretty soon everyone – agents, managers – saw that there were opportunities, and that meant larger arenas were going to be needed to house them. The coliseums suddenly became the new rock'n'roll auditorium."

Gigs had been held in big sporting stadia before, but only occasionally and only featuring the very biggest bands like the Rolling Stones and The Beatles. Graham surely loved the music, but he was also a pragmatist. If a gig was a big success and the fans loved it, then he won both artistically and financially.

"As the business changed and the acts kept demanding more and more money," said Graham, "we started doing one-day outdoor shows with one big headliner and several support acts. The first one was at Kezar Stadium [an outdoor athletics stadium in San Francisco] at the end of May 1973. The Grateful Dead, the New Riders Of The Purple Sage, and Waylon Jennings were on the bill."



AC/DC guitarist Angus Young gets right into the Day On The Green groove in 1979

A week later, it was Led Zeppelin's turn to play Kezar to 50,000 people. Though this was 6,000 short of capacity, news reports quoted the organisers as saying the group netted more than $1,000 per minute during the show here. Zeppelin played for about 150 minutes.

Working with Zeppelin on this show was at the start of what would be a notoriously tetchy relationship between Graham and one of the world's most bankable rock acts. Zeppelin arrived late that night, as they often did, Jimmy Page having decided to fly by United Airlines and not in the group's private jet. This infuriated Graham, who had to walk on stage and make excuses for the band's tardiness. His most creative explanation was saying Page was having issues with his trademark double-neck Gibson guitar and wanted to get things just right before the band took the stage. Of course, Page was nowhere near the stadium at the time, but Graham knew Zeppelin's fans thought of Page's guitar as some kind of holy relic. They swallowed the promoter's fiction whole and patiently waited.

IN THE summer of 1973 Graham helped create the huge Watkins Glen Festival. In his 1980 book, *Aquarius Rising: The Rock Festival Years*, author Robert Santilli wrote: "Many historians claimed that the Watkins Glen event was the largest gathering of people in the history of the United States. In essence, that meant that on 28 July, one out of every 350 people living in America at the time was listening to the sounds of rock at the New York state racetrack. Considering that most of those who attended the event hailed from the North-east, and that the average age of those present was approximately 17 to 24, close to one out of every three young people from Boston to New York was at the festival."

One thing was clear. Rock was now *big* business. And no one understood that better than Graham.

"My desire was never to go with larger and larger facilities," said Graham in his autobiography. "But it had gotten to the point where demand was bigger than supply. If we hadn't done it, someone else would have. That was the bottom line. They'd already started doing shows in Philadelphia, Texas, Chicago and Georgia. But in San Francisco there was a long history of free shows in the park and an honourable non-money relationship between the people and the bands. That was why I came up with the name Day On The Green. I wanted to make these events special. I wanted to create giant outdoor sets, so the bands would be going into a space that was like a theatre piece."

Day On The Green was born with the idea of providing an outdoor event at which the bands themselves were the focal point. Graham decided that the location for his innovative new idea would not be his traditional San Francisco power base. Instead he hopped across the bay to Oakland.

"You've got to remember Oakland was a pretty scary, rough place," says *Rock Candy* and *Kerrang!* writer Xavier Russell, who attended five Day On The Green shows. "Bill must have got a good deal to put it on there, but it made sense in some ways. It was on the Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) line, so there were good transport links from San Francisco. Other alternatives like Candlestick Park [home at the time of American football outfit the San Francisco 49ers] were probably too windy."

"The concerts were very successful right from the start," said Graham. "The concert goer was living in the real world now."

This was an important factor in the evolution of Day On The Green. By 1973 the hippy counter-culture days were over. Rock'n'roll was becoming increasingly more popular with people who didn't necessarily want to turn on, tune in and drop out, as Timothy Leary had so famously advocated. As Steely Dan said in the song 'Kid Charlemagne', "*All those dayglo freaks who used to paint the face, they've joined the human race.*"

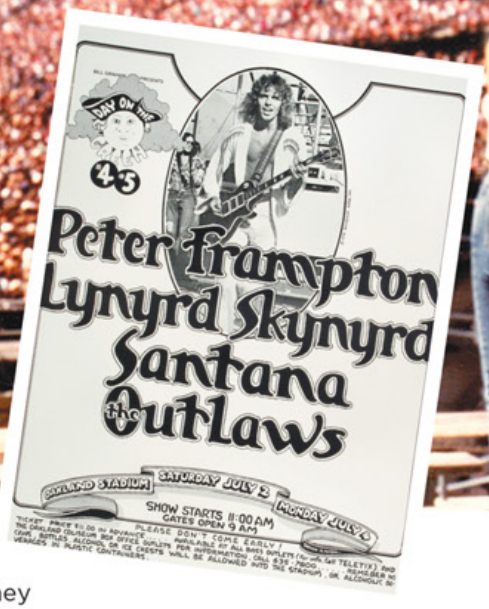
THE FIRST ever Day On The Green, held on 5 August 1973, featured headliner Leon Russell, supported by Loggins and Messina, Elvin Bishop, and Mary McCreary. Encouraged by the event's initial success, Graham put on an ambitious three shows in 1974. On 8 June the bill featured the Grateful Dead, The Beach Boys, New Riders Of The Purple Sage, and Commander Cody And His Lost Planet Airmen. The following month a bill of Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young, The Band, Joe Walsh, and Jesse Colin Young played on both 13 and 14 July. With Oakland Coliseum's capacity set at 50,000 – and with rumours of many more people being allowed in to fill the field – from the off these were hugely popular, successful shows.

Day On The Green quickly became an important staple of the US live rock calendar and in 1975 Graham took things up a notch when he booked six different ►

Photos: Getty Images/Richard McCaffrey/Michael Ochs Archive

UNCOVERED

Metallica frontman James Hetfield and a smattering of his Bay Area friends



shows across the summer, double the previous year's three days. The third gig of the run, held on 3 August, was of particular interest. Billed as 'The British Are Coming', it featured Robin Trower, Peter Frampton, Dave Mason, Fleetwood Mac, and Gary Wright. The huge audience at the Coliseum that day featured on the cover of 1976's 'Robin Trower Live' album, even though it was actually recorded in Stockholm. There was also a shot of the 1975 Oakland crowd on the back of Johnny Winter's '76 live album, 'Captured Live'. By using these shots on their sleeves, the artists were helping to spread the word about the Day On The Green event, while also contributing to its burgeoning reputation as an iconic gig.

"There must've been 55,000-80,000 there most shows," remembers Xavier Russell. "It was always packed out on the grass, with only a few empty seats way up in the stands."

Yet with that kind of audience turn-out and the hippy dippy days of Haight-Ashbury fading from view, Day On The Green quickly became a battlefield for people who were every bit as interested in money as they were in music. Graham soon found himself in conflict yet again with the monstrously successful Led Zeppelin, a group whose management set-up didn't play games when it came to making sure they got their financial dues. Zep had first been booked for a two-day Day On The Green run in 1975, but were forced to cancel when frontman Robert Plant was involved in a serious car crash.

"We'd sold a million dollars worth of tickets for the two Led Zeppelin shows," said Graham. "I returned 120,000 tickets. That alone cost me $130,000 in ticket service charges. We'd already put the deposit down on the stadium. We'd done a lot of promotion and advertising. We'd done a poster. We lost it *all*. Led Zeppelin's management refused to pick up any of the cancellation costs. To them it was an act of God. They could have offered us *something* to help make up for that loss. But they didn't. And it hurt."

TWO YEARS later though – and with Zeppelin still a massive draw – Graham decided to try again, booking the band for another two-day Day On The Green stint, on 23 and 24 July 1977, with Derringer and Judas Priest in support. All the same, Graham was very wary of Zeppelin and their heavyweight manager Peter Grant...

"I'd heard stories from other cities about how they had muscled promoters to get better deals," he explained. "How they'd shaken them down for money. I had heard about the ugliness of their security. How they were just waiting to kill. They had these bodyguards who were just immense." It looked like things could easily turn ugly given what had happened in '75. And sure enough, that's what happened...

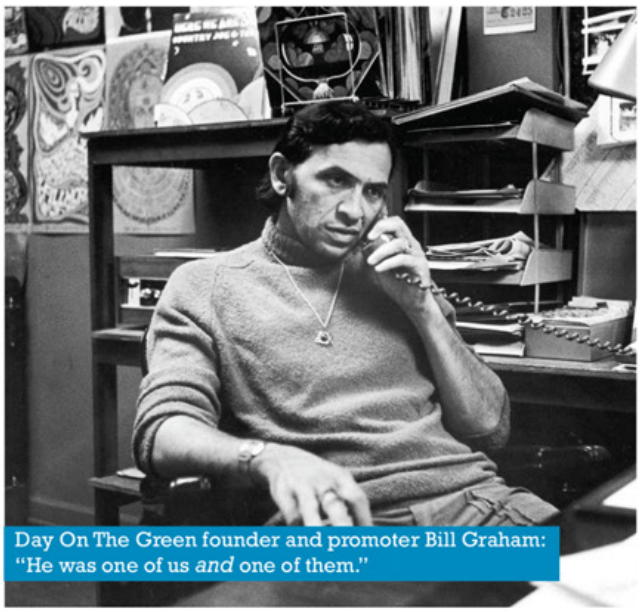
After the first show one of Graham's personnel, Jim Matzorkis, stopped Peter Grant's young son from taking the Zeppelin name sign off their trailer doors. Word got back to Grant that Matzorkis had either hit the boy, or at least spoken to him harshly. Matzorkis denies anything of the sort happened. Grant and his security guy John Bindon contrived to get Graham to take them to the Winnebago where Matzorkis was hiding after a previous altercation with Zeppelin drummer John Bonham.

"I opened the trailer and went in first," recounts Graham in *Bill Graham Presents*. "In one move I was behind Grant. He just grabbed Jim's hand, pulled it towards him, took his fist with the fingers all covered in rings and smashed Jim in the face, knocking him back into his seat. I lunged at Grant. He picked me up like I was a fly and handed me to the guy by the steps. That

guy shoved me out. He threw me down the steps and shut the door."

Grant and Bindon beat Matzorkis severely and Graham's man ended up in hospital, bloodied and bruised and minus a tooth. Graham was outraged at Zeppelin's thuggish behaviour, but knew there was one more show to play the following day and that to cancel it was to lose a huge amount of money and upset a lot of fans. So he signed a letter of indemnification absolving Zeppelin from all responsibility for the violence and the second show went ahead. But Graham had no real intention of simply forgetting about what had happened, and Grant, Bindon, Bonham, and Zeppelin tour manager Richard Cole were arrested that night at their hotel by Oakland police and were charged with assault.

The four were granted bail, but later pleaded 'no contest' and were handed suspended sentences. Graham and Zeppelin never worked together again. The band's next show was in New Orleans, but ahead of that performance vocalist Robert Plant received news from England that his five-year-old son Karac had died from a stomach virus. The rest of the tour was immediately cancelled and Led Zeppelin would never play another US show.



Day On The Green founder and promoter Bill Graham: "He was one of us *and* one of them."

NOTHING ELSE in the history of Day On The Green would ever match the Zeppelin affair for sheer unadulterated darkness. In comparison, then, the following year's spat with Day Five headliner Ted Nugent felt like kindergarten stuff.

Dennis Larkins designed many of the huge stage sets created specifically for Day On The Green. "I attended most shows from 1974 through 1981 as art director/designer," he told the website *highwaytoacdc.com*. "A situation occurred during the final days of painting the set for the 2 September 1978 show, originally themed as a 'Rock & Roll Circus'. I got an urgent call from Bill Graham wanting to know if I could change the circus clowns in the design to 'attack dogs'! He'd shown the set design to [headline act] Ted Nugent, who instantly freaked out and said, 'If the set has clowns in it, I'm not going on!' As the production was nearly complete, with only four days until the show, this request was impossible. In response we all immediately went into 'crisis mode' and changed the design concept to 'Rumble In The Jungle' by using elements of the circus set, like charging lions and tigers, and dressed-up cargo netting, along with a new logo."

BY 1978, and most likely as a reflection of the emerging dominance of hard rock music on American radio, Day On The Green was starting to feature a greater proportion of heavier bands. Day Three that year was every heavy rock fan's dream as Aerosmith headlined, ably supported by Foreigner, Pat Travers, Van Halen, and AC/DC. Tickets cost just $11 in advance and $12.50 on the day – about $42 in today's money. Future Guns N' Roses star Slash later recalled his experience of attending the show. "It was insanity," he said. "You're sitting behind some 200-pound muscular blond guy who smells like a 12-pack, fist-f*cking the air in every direction."

In an interview with *Guitar Player* in 1997, Eddie Van Halen recalled having to follow AC/DC that day: "AC/DC was probably one of the most powerful bands I've ever seen in my life," he said. "The energy – they were unstoppable. I was sitting in my trailer and I heard this rubble-pounding noise from the stage. I went up there and saw 60,000 people bopping up and down at the same time. I was standing on the side of the stage thinking, 'We've got to follow these muthaf*ckers?' They were so f*ckin' powerful, but I remember feeling we held our own. I was really happy. It blew my mind. I didn't think anyone could follow them."

Rock Candy reader Jim Lewerenz recalls being at the fourth day – featuring the Rolling Stones, Santana, Eddie Money, Peter Tosh, and Toots And The Maytals. "The gig was on a Wednesday and I cut work to go," he recalls. "My boss said if anyone called in sick and went to this show, then they'd be fired. The bass player with Peter Tosh was so stoned I literally thought he was going to fall off the front of the stage. It was the first concert I ever smoked a doobie at while Santana were playing. Carlos was badass of course, and the Stones killed. I recall Mick trying to grab Bill Wyman's balls a few times and Bill blocking Mick with his bass guitar. Good times!"

DAY THREE IN 1978 WAS EVERY HEAVY ROCK FAN'S DREAM AS AEROSMITH HEADLINED, ABLY SUPPORTED BY FOREIGNER, PAT TRAVERS, VAN HALEN, AND AC/DC. TICKETS COST JUST $11 IN ADVANCE AND $12.50 ON THE DAY.

BY THE time the 1980s dawned, Bill Graham Productions had decided to scale Day On The Green events from as many as eight shows a year down to just two or three. Nonetheless, the quality of the bills was still undeniable. Who wouldn't want to have witnessed the show on 4 July 1981 that featured Heart, Blue Öyster Cult, Pat Travers, Loverboy, Ozzy Osbourne, and 415? Or the gig on 2 August that year where REO Speedwagon, Kansas, UFO, .38 Special, and Gamma all performed?

"All of the five Day On The Green shows I went to were really great," says Xavier Russell. "I never saw any trouble. Backstage, the bands all intermingled and you could just go up to them and have a chat before they went onstage. It was all very relaxed. Everything seemed much more open back then."

Relaxed or not, with big crowds still flocking to Day On The Green there was plenty of money still being made...

"A lot of bands wouldn't go on unless they were paid cash upfront," recalls Russell. "I think Bill Curbishley, manager of The Who, liked to do it that way – and he ►

Photos: Gene Ambo; Getty Images/Jon Brennels/The LIFE Images Collection

UNCOVERED

The scene from behind the stage at Day On The Green, 28 May 1977, when the Eagles headlined

wouldn't have been the only one. I used to think how odd it was that you'd see bands' managers walking around backstage with these leather cases, but they were probably full of cash."

HOWEVER, TIMES were changing musically. By the time The Police, The Fixx, Madness, Oingo Boingo, and The Thompson Twins played on 10 September 1983, many long-time Day On The Green fans began to feel the golden era might be over. It's true that Journey, Triumph, Eddie Money, and Bryan Adams also played that year, but the introduction of bands that didn't play long guitar solos you could wig out to wasn't welcomed by everyone.

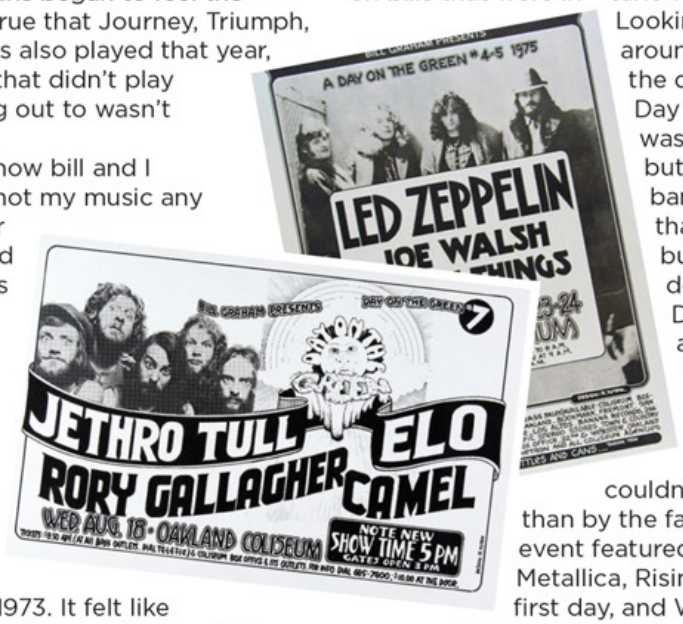
"I looked at that third 1983 show bill and I thought, 'No way, man. That's not my music any more," says *Rock Candy* reader Scott Daley from Oakland. "And there were a whole bunch of us who felt the same."

"I wanted rock'n'roll and only rock'n'roll," confirmed another *Rock Candy* reader, OJ Thompson from Fresno. "And Oingo freakin' Boingo ain't that, man."

Perhaps chastened by this booking misstep, there was no Day On The Green show in 1984 for the first time since 1973. It felt like the event's momentum had somehow stalled, and it's probable that there was now competition for punters' dollars in California as other one-day festivals packed with great bands sprang up. The US Festivals of 1982 and 1983 in San Bernardino ran across three days and featured stellar line-ups of their own, including a specific metal day at the 1983 event that brought together Van Halen, Scorpions, Judas Priest and others.

Mandy Underhill from Santa Clara had gone to at least one Day On The Green show per year since 1974. "They were the best days of my life, musically," she recalls. "Just wonderful and full of good vibes – and we saw so many incredible bands, I still can't believe it. We took it all for granted back then. But by 1985 it was over. We all knew it. I bet Bill Graham knew it too. Rock had changed and, y'know, life had changed for all of us. It seemed kinda dated to go to Oakland and get stoned in the sun for 12 hours. That was *sooo* '70s."

It felt as if Day On The Green was no longer able to put on bills that were in tune with the culture of the day. Looking at things the other way around, perhaps the culture of the day was no longer suited to Day On The Green. Rock music was still enormously popular, but MTV could make stars of bands much more quickly and that made the prospect of building your way up from low down on the bill of a show like Day On The Green seem less appealing. Certainly, guitar-based rock was by now only a part of the Day On The Green mix rather than its core constituent. This couldn't be more amply illustrated than by the fact that 1985's two-day event featured the Scorpions, RATT, Y&T, Metallica, Rising Force, and Victory on the first day, and Wham!, The Pointer Sisters, and Katrina And The Waves on the second. And let's face it, no one ever climbed up a big pole to listen to Wham!



THE EVENT was clearly encountering difficulties as the '80s drew to a close. There was no event at all in 1986, while 1987 saw a show headlined by Bob Dylan, who wasn't exactly on a career high. In 1988 Pink Floyd played two solo shows under the Day On The Green banner, and The Who did the same in 1989. The Stones played with Living Colour, also in 1989, but in truth all of

Photo: Getty Images/Brad Elterman/Film Magic

these shows were just standard stadium gigs. And that wasn't what Day On The Green had originally been.

"As a long time fan of Day On The Green and of Bill Graham, when I saw Floyd playing without any support band but using the Day On The Green tag, it felt like a betrayal of the original spirit," said Ryan Stewart from San Francisco. "Where was Blue Öyster Cult? Where was Journey? Where was Sammy Hagar? Truthfully, it felt like what had been *our* show had been stolen from us."

In 1990 pop upstarts New Kids On The Block headlined Day On The Green, which seemed to sum up just how far the concept had sunk. Graham redeemed himself somewhat the following year when Metallica, Queensrÿche, Faith No More, and Soundgarden performed. But just 13 days after that show, on 25 October 1991, Bill Graham was taking his usual helicopter home from a Huey Lewis And The News concert at the Concord Pavilion in California when, in bad weather, it flew into a 223-foot high-voltage tower near where Highway 37 crosses Sonoma Creek. The helicopter burst into flames on impact, killing Graham, the pilot, Steve Kahn, and Graham's girlfriend, Melissa Gold. He was just 60 years old.

BILL GRAHAM was an immense loss to the music business. He'd been a prime mover and shaker for nearly 25 years. He'd pioneered the idea of presenting rock bands in theatres like the Fillmores and the Winterland Ballroom in San Francisco. He'd supported and given a helping hand to so many bands, especially from the Bay Area. He'd pioneered the idea of raising money for charity from rock'n'roll shows, having promoted the US Live Aid in 1985, two Amnesty International benefit tours in 1986 and 1988, and the Concert Against AIDS benefit in 1989. With Day On The Green, Graham created a successful template for the big one-day show that would soon become the norm. Perhaps he wasn't the first promoter to put on such shows in sports stadiums, but Graham was the first to make it work, time and time again, and turn an event into a brand. He was a hard-nosed businessman on the one hand, but an idealist on the other; a man who believed in music and in giving people a good time.

"I met Bill a couple of times because I got on well with Herbie Herbert, Journey's manager," says Xavier Russell. "They were *the* local band, of course. Bill was always very nice and always arrived in his own helicopter. The reason that the likes of Journey [who played Day On The Green six times in eight years], Blue Öyster Cult and Sammy Hagar often played was because they got on well with Bill. He was always supportive of local bands too, that's why 415, The Tubes and Eddie Money all got on the bill.

"Bill really knew what fans wanted to see. He was really good at that. Going to Day On The Green didn't feel like going to a festival. It was more like a really big gig, and 9 times out of 10 you wanted to see *all* the bands on the bill. Everyone always seemed to play really well and, unusually, the sound was always really good. They were happy shows that were run really efficiently."

Day On The Green really was Bill Graham's baby. When he died the spirit of the event died with him. Events under the same banner took place after Bill's death, in 1992 and 1999, but it was obvious that it just wasn't the same. Without Bill Graham, Day On The Green had lost its unique beating heart and soul. Grace Slick, singer with that great San Francisco band Jefferson Airplane/Starship perhaps best summed up why Bill Graham holds such a unique place in rock history. "He was one of us *and* one of them," she said. And in truth, that was perhaps Bill Graham's single greatest talent.

SEE! HEAR! FEEL!

FOUR FANTASTIC DAY ON THE GREEN PERFORMANCES YOU CAN WATCH ON YOUTUBE

JOURNEY – 'Who's Crying Now' – 26 June 1982
(JOURNEY 1982 "DAY ON THE GREEN" OAKLAND, CALF.)
Local heroes Journey were Day On The Green favourites, and put out some serious sounds on this particular outing, despite having succumbed to the fashion abominations of the '80s. Neal Schon solos like an angel, while looking like an extra from *Fame*; bassist Ross Valory plays the world's smallest bass guitar. But who gives a toss when the band make music like this?

AC/DC – Full concert – 21 July 1979
(AC/DC - FULL CONCERT - 07/21/79 - OAKLAND COLISEUM STADIUM (OFFICIAL))
More than 51 minutes of prime char-broiled 'DC beef performed in front of the most bizarre backdrop of a jungle montage, complete with cartoon-style dinosaurs. Day On The *Green*? Jungle? We *suppose* it works. This superlative performance, with Angus truly on fire, can only make you sad about the passing of time. RIP Malcolm and Bon.

LYNYRD SKYNYRD – 'Sweet Home Alabama'/'Freebird' – 2 July 1977
(LYNYRD SKYNYRD - DAY ON THE GREEN - 07/02/77 - OAKLAND COLISEUM STADIUM (OFFICIAL))
Skynyrd at the very height of their considerable powers, performing 'Sweet Home Alabama' and 'Freebird' over almost 19 minutes and with tremendous Southern sass. There are some great crowd shots here of everyone rocking out under a scorching sun. Oh to have been young in America back in 1977!

METALLICA – 'For Whom The Bell Tolls' – 31 August 1985
(METALLICA - FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS (LIVE) [CLIFF 'EM ALL])
Taken from Metallica's *Cliff 'Em All* video release, this provides an endearing tribute to the flares-obsessed bass player on his home turf, as he headbangs his way through this mid-paced mutha. The crowd goes suitably ape – and all is well with the world.

Celtic Frost leader Tom G. Warrior: "Earth-shaking heaviness"

CELTIC FROST - 'TO MEGA THERION'

DATELINE: 27 OCTOBER 1985

SWISS AVANT-GARDE METAL MIGHT SEEM LIKE A MINORITY SPORT, BUT THIS ALBUM'S WEIRD POWER SAW IT HAILED AS A CLASSIC OF ITS TIME. DOES IT STILL STAND UP TODAY?

CELTIC FROST
'To Mega Therion' (Noise Records)
Released: 27 October 1985

LINE UP
TOM G. WARRIOR – guitars, vocals, effects
DOMINIC STEINER – bass, bass effects
REED ST. MARK – drums, percussion, effects

ADDITIONAL MUSICIANS
MARTIN ERIC AIN – bass (on tracks 2 and 3 of reissued version of album)
WOLF BENDER – French horn
CLAUDIA-MARIA MOKRI – additional vocals
HORST MÜLLER – sound effects
URS SPRENGER – sound effects

PRODUCED BY
Horst Müller, Tom G. Warrior

RECORDED AT
Casablanca Studio, Berlin, Germany

TRACK LISTING
Innocence And Wrath (Tom G. Warrior)
The Usurper (Tom G. Warrior)
Jewel Throne (Tom G. Warrior)
Dawn Of Megiddo (Tom G. Warrior, Martin Eric Ain)
Eternal Summer (Tom G. Warrior)
Circle Of The Tyrants (Tom G. Warrior)
(Beyond The) North Winds (Tom G. Warrior)
Fainted Eyes (Tom G. Warrior)
Tears In A Prophet's Dream (Celtic Frost, Steve Warrior)
Necromantical Screams (Tom G. Warrior, Martin Eric Ain)

WHICH CLASSIC ALBUMS WOULD YOU LIKE US TO REVISIT?
EMAIL: EDITORIAL@ROCKCANDYMAG.COM

TOM G. WARRIOR ON 'TO MEGA THERION': "I knew we had to take a step up with regard to the sophistication of our own music to remain competitive. Moreover, we aimed to be more experimental and to give free reign to our (somewhat untypical) influences."

WHEN THE FIRST FULL-LENGTH album by Celtic Frost was released in 1985, it was *Kerrang!* writer Xavier Russell who recognised the Swiss band as one of the heaviest and most innovative of its time. In this album, 'To Mega Therion', were riffs of such crushing power that Russell hailed Frost as "the Sabbath of the '80s," together with an art rock sensibility for which he proclaimed them "the world's most avant-garde heavy metal band." In the golden age of thrash metal, Celtic Frost stood tall as true originals. 'To Mega Therion' was a classic of the genre.

> WHAT SEPARATED CELTIC FROST FROM EVERY OTHER BAND OF THE THRASH ERA WAS A HIGHBROW ARTISTIC ETHOS. 'TO MEGA THERION' STOOD APART AS AN ALBUM WHERE EXTREME METAL WAS ELEVATED TO AN ART FORM.

Classic Celtic Frost, 1985. L-R: Tom G. Warrior (guitar, vocals, effects), Martin Eric Ain (bass), Reed St. Mark (drums, percussion, effects)

BASED IN Zurich, Celtic Frost was formed in 1984 by guitarist/vocalist Thomas Gabriel Warrior and bassist Martin Eric Ain. The pair's previous project was the short-lived Hellhammer – widely ridiculed at the time, though since acknowledged as a seminal extreme metal band. But with Celtic Frost, it was immediately apparent that Warrior and Ain had developed a concept and a sound that was superior to Hellhammer on every level.

The debut release, 1984 mini-album 'Morbid Tales', featured drummer Stephen Priestly alongside Warrior and Ain, and in tracks such as 'Into The Crypts Of Rays', a signature sound was developed. Mixing the grinding riffing style of early Black Sabbath with the brutal high-speed attack of Venom, this sound was dirty and doom-laden, with a heavy atmosphere enhanced by occult-referencing lyrics and Warrior's trademarked guttural 'death grunts'. The EP 'Emperor's Return', issued in August 1985, had American drummer Reed St. Mark in place of Priestly, and more of that dark intensity, as illustrated in the lead track, 'Circle Of The Tyrants'. Just two months later came the release of 'To Mega Therion'.

CELTIC FROST'S defining work arrived with perfect timing, in a year in which thrash metal, a grass-roots revolution kicked off by Metallica's 1983 debut 'Kill 'Em All', was fast becoming a global phenomenon.

The three fellow 'Big Four' members all delivered great albums in '85. Slayer's 'Hell Awaits' saw the band hailed by *Kerrang!*'s Geoff Barton as "the most threatening, subversive band on the planet." Anthrax, with new singer Joey Belladonna, upped their game with 'Spreading The Disease'. And from Megadeth came a debut as violent as its titled implied: 'Killing Is My Business... And Business Is Good!' Most brutal of all was 'Bonded By Blood' by Exodus, neighbours of Metallica and masters of the 'Bay Area Crunch'. And from Europe, and the Noise Records stable that included Celtic Frost, came the debuts by two speed-crazed young German bands – Helloween's 'Walls Of Jericho' and Kreator's 'Endless Pain'.

AMID ALL this filth and fury, 'To Mega Therion' stood apart as an album where extreme metal was elevated to an art form. There was earth-shaking heaviness in Sabbath-inspired tracks 'The Usurper', 'Jewel Throne' and 'Dawn Of Megiddo', and in a new version of 'Circle Of The Tyrants'. But what separated Celtic Frost from every other band of the thrash era was a highbrow artistic ethos – evident in the chilling ambient noise of 'Tears In A Prophet's Dream', and in the thunderous introductory piece 'Innocence And Wrath', a funereal dirge complete with rumbling timpani and sombre French horn.

Emblematic of the album's monumental sense of scale is the cover art – a Surrealist painting entitled 'Satan I' by fellow Swiss H.R. Giger, famed for creating the monsters in the *Alien* movies. And in keeping with the esoteric lyrical themes of the band's earlier work, the title 'To Mega Therion' came from the Greek for 'The Great Beast', a mantle claimed by occultist Aleister Crowley.

The album was a towering musical achievement made all the more remarkable given that it was recorded by a band in turmoil. Martin Ain quit just before the recording sessions began, so 'To Mega Therion' featured his temporary replacement Dominic Streiner on bass. Ain later rejoined the band and in 1986 they remixed two tracks from the album ('The Usurper' and 'Jewel Throne') for a spin-off EP called 'Tragic Serenades', replacing the original bass parts with Ain's work. These new versions now appear on all reissues of 'To Mega Therion'.

CELTIC FROST'S subsequent career proved turbulent. The biggest shock came when the band's boldest art rock statement, 1987's 'Into The Pandemonium', was followed by an act of folly – 1988's 'Cold Lake' album, on which Warrior, minus Ain, led a new version of Frost, playing Mötley Crüe-style cock rock and looking like Poison. But the power and mystery in 'To Mega Therion' is not diminished. The band broke up for the final time in 2008, and Ain sadly died from a heart attack in 2017.
PAUL ELLIOTT

THE ORIGINAL REVIEWS

"If King Crimson had partial lobotomies, Lemmy's speed supply and a necromantical bent they'd probably sound like Celtic Frost. Let's hear it for avant-thrash... mega metal with wild, almost jazz-like rhythms and fascinating, almost art rock sounds, mixed in with... slam-diving... thrash and jagged shards-of-stained-glass-gurgling vocals that combine to take a corkscrew to your braincells."
– Sylvie Simmons, *Kerrang!*, October 1985

"Epic is a good word to describe this album. It emanates power. Lyrically, no band in the underground can surpass the poetry of Tom Warrior [whose] words contain a... cosmic vastness... above and beyond typical metal lyrics. A very heavy LP from possibly the world's heaviest band."
– Don Kaye, *Hard Rocks*, 1985

Photos: IconicPix/George Chin; Sergio Archetti

'TO MEGA THERION' FACT: The album might have included a version of Frank Sinatra's 1967 single 'The World We Knew (Over And Over)', but the idea was dropped after Megadeth covered 'These Boots Are Made For Walkin'', a hit for Frank's daughter Nancy.

STRIKTLY FOR KONNOISSEURS

MONSTER ROCK ALBUMS FOR THOSE WHO NEED TO GO DEEPER

James Gang circa 1970. L-R: Jim Fox (drums and vocals), Dale Peters (bass and vocals), Joe Walsh (guitar and vocals)

JAMES GANG – 'James Gang Rides Again'

(ABC RECORDS)

ORIGINAL RELEASE DATE – 1970

LINE UP
JOE WALSH – GUITARS, VOCALS, KEYBOARDS, PIANO, PERCUSSION
DALE PETERS – BASS GUITARS, VOCALS, GUITARS, KEYBOARDS, PERCUSSION
JIM FOX – DRUMS, VOCALS, PERCUSSION, KEYBOARDS, ORGAN, PIANO

THESE DAYS CLEVELAND'S JAMES Gang are best remembered as the act that launched the careers of two legendary American guitarists, the Eagles' Joe Walsh and Deep Purple's Tommy Bolin. But there was much more to this band than simply being an involuntary springboard for ex-members' future successes. Released in 1970, 'Rides Again' – the three-piece band's second album – is one of the finest American recordings from rock's golden age. Kansas-born Joe Walsh joined James Gang in 1968 and appeared on their sparkling debut LP, 1969's, 'Yer' Album'. His richly textured fretwork throughout the first three James Gang studio albums is nothing short of astonishing, as Walsh delicately paints mellifluous soundscapes only to rip them to shreds in a trice with pummelling riffs.

'RIDES AGAIN' opens with 'Funk #49', a companion piece to the similarly nimble 'Funk #48' from the band's debut album. The song's insanely catchy riff has latterly become a staple of rock radio, while Walsh still uses it as his signature piece during Eagles concerts. The song then melts into a deliciously trippy instrumental 'Asshtonpark', which in turn is blown away by another pulsating rocker, 'Woman'.

It's the sheer breadth and variety of material that makes 'Rides Again' such an enduring album, something you want to go back to again and again. 'Tend My Garden', for example, is a slower rocker that's jockeyed along by an insistent keyboard motif. And even when the Gang cool things down, there's no let-up in quality. The album includes two beautiful slower numbers at the end. 'There I Go Again' features the pedal steel guitar of Poco stalwart Rusty Young, while 'Ashes, The Rain And I' is both heavily orchestrated and incredibly haunting. If a heavy band can be measured by the quality of their quieter work, then James Gang surely lead the pack.

Nonetheless, the highlight of the album has to be the monstrous 'The Bomber (Medley)'. The song starts with a heavy-as-hell porterhouse steak of a riff that fades into a gorgeous mid-section of spaced out psych-tinged guitar, including a working of Ravel's 'Bolero' on some original and later reissue versions (it was initially removed when Ravel's estate objected to its use without an orchestra.) And then *that* riff returns to muscle its way back to centre stage. If you think Zeppelin have the copyright on hard-as-nails psychedelic blues grooves, think again. This is one of early '70s rock's most sublime moments. And don't tell me Black Sabbath weren't thinking of this when they penned 'Symptom Of The Universe' five years later!

ALTHOUGH WALSH is at the very top of his game throughout 'Rides Again', his bandmates – bassist Dale Peters and drummer Jim Fox – are still absolutely integral to the record, making the James Gang genuine rivals to Mountain for the title of America's greatest power trio of all time.

Giles Hamilton

Photos: Getty Images/Michael Ochs Archive; Julia Goode

Icon guitarist John Aquilino and vocalist Stephen Clifford. Criminally ignored!

ICON – 'Night Of The Crime'

(CAPITOL)

ORIGINAL RELEASE DATE – 1985

LINE UP
STEPHEN CLIFFORD – VOCALS
DAN WEXLER – GUITARS
TRACY WALLACH – BASS, VOCALS
JOHN AQUILINO – GUITARS
PAT DIXON – DRUMS

TO TRACE THE ROOTS of Icon you have to go back to the late '70s metal scene in Arizona, where future members – guitarist Dan Wexler, vocalist Stephen Clifford and bassist Tracy Wallach – were playing in local Phoenix act The Schoolboys. Joined by guitarist David Philip Henzerling and drummer John Covington, they cut an impressive EP, 'Singin' Shoutin''.

Shortly after this release The Schoolboys replaced both Henzerling and Covington with Pat Dixon (who had issued a very hard-to-find, privately pressed album with his band Loosely Tight) and John Aquilino respectively. The band soon started to attract attention further afield. Both Mike Varney at Shrapnel Records and major label Capitol took a keen interest, and showed up at a showcase in Phoenix. Capitol ended up signing the band; Varney was taken on as producer. Respected manager Peter Morticelli was also at the showcase and agreed to handle the band's affairs.

WITH CAPITOL insisting on a name change, The Schoolboys became Icon and recorded their eponymous debut for the label in '84. The songs were cut from a similar cloth to metal darlings of the time like W.A.S.P. and Quiet Riot, but the material just wasn't good enough. Icon were in need of a makeover, especially as Capitol looked ready to drop the band. Pressure from manager Morticelli led to the group getting another shot, though not without conditions imposed by the label. Mike Varney was ousted as producer in favour of Hendrix, Zeppelin and Kiss man Eddie Kramer. Respected songwriter Bob Halligan Jr. was brought in to give six of the band's 10 songs a more commercial edge.

RECORDED AT Bearsville Studios in New York State, 'Night Of The Crime' looked to be a major step forward for the band. Kramer's initial mix was considered too raw, however, and Ron Nevison handled the final mix, much to Kramer's chagrin. Nevison gave the album the radio-friendly sheen Capitol wanted.

THE END results were sonic perfection and the album easily left the band's debut in the shade. Here were 10 tracks of silky, hook-infused rock brilliance that seemed tailor-made for chart success. Yet with vocalist Stephen Clifford quitting after finding God, and Capitol deciding to drop the band, Icon were dead in the water by the time 'Night Of The Crime' appeared in September of 1985. Their shot at the big time was already over.

WHY SONGS like '(Take Another) Shot At My Heart', 'Danger Calling', 'Out For Blood', 'Missing' and 'Frozen Tears' never dominated the charts the way inferior tunes from Quiet Riot, RATT and Mötley Crüe did is one of life's mysteries. 'Night Of The Crime' is one of the greatest albums never to make the grade, an essential listen for any self-respecting hard rock konnoisseur.

Rob Evans

ROCK CANDY REISSUES

THE VERY LATEST HOT RE-RELEASES FROM THE LABEL

Hotel L-R: Michael Reid, George Creasman, Michael Cadenhead, Lee Bargeron, Marc Phillips, Tommy Calton

HOTEL – 'Half Moon Silver'

ORIGINAL RELEASE DATE – 1980

LINE UP

Marc Phillips – lead vocals, guitar, keyboards
Michael Reid – guitars, vocals
Tommy Calton – guitars, keyboards, vocals
Lee Bargeron – keyboards, guitar, vocals
George Creasman – bass, vocals
Michael Cadenhead – drums, vocals

BACKGROUND

Back in the heyday of vinyl, record collectors would scour the racks for albums featuring members who played multiple instruments. If every musician was also credited as a vocalist, it was another mark of excellence. The likes of Toto, the Doobie Brothers and the Eagles were all cut from the same cloth, meaning that Hotel were in fine company.

Hailing from Birmingham, Alabama, the band was a sextet that evolved through a number of line-ups, but was always based around the central duo of Marc Phillips and Tommy Calton, both of whom contributed vocals, guitars and keyboards. The band was originally signed to Mercury in 1977, but after releasing just one single, 'You'll Love Again', they found themselves cast adrift. Thanks to a chance meeting on a flight, however, the head of Scotti Brothers Records was handed a tape and this led to a new record deal.

'Half Moon Silver', Hotel's second album under this new label, is rightly regarded as a minor classic among AOR aficionados. Issued in 1980 and produced by the band's mentor, Dain Eric, the album purposely leans toward a harder rock edge. The vibe is very much one of waking up the neighbours, but not in a chest thumping sense. The guitars are prominent and the rhythm section is out to impress, but they still leave room for lead vocalist Marc Phillips to inject passion and excitement into meticulously constructed songs.

'Half Moon Silver' is a fine example of carefully crafted AOR, drinking from the same goblet as Player, Le Roux, and Toto. The musicianship is first class in all respects, with careful attention paid to song arrangements and execution.

WHAT BAND LEADER MARC PHILLIPS SAYS

"We were deliberately trying to be harder and heavier on 'Half Moon Silver'. We'd received feedback that people liked our rock side. 'Wanting You Too My Love', well that's just riff rock. It's very Zeppelin-like!"

TRACKS TO CHECK OUT

There's plenty to highlight, but it's the triple whammy of 'A Place In Time (Refugee)', 'Cold Blooded Red Hot Love' and 'Now That She Loves You' that really set the pace, not to mention the powerful crunch of 'Wanting You Too My Love'.

MORE BANG FOR YOUR BUCK

The Rock Candy CD is, we believe, the first official reissue of this album and features a 12-page, full-colour booklet with enhanced artwork, previously unseen photos and a 3,500 word essay by *Rock Candy Mag* writer Dave Reynolds, including a new interview with Marc Phillips.

THE WORD FROM RC BOSS DEREK OLIVER

"It's been said a thousand times, but the number of quality rock albums released in the '70s and '80s that were overlooked is simply staggering. It was a decade later that collectors started to unearth these curios to discover some minor classics – and Hotel was one such case. It didn't help that the band was signed to the emerging Scotti Brothers Records. Later on, they would have massive success with Survivor, but at this point the label lacked the perfect distribution partner. MCA Records handled this Hotel release, but despite initial enthusiasm, they failed to maximise the album's potential. Even though they toured with Hall & Oates, Hotel sadly fell through the cracks, leaving them adrift in a world that had no heart for sob stories."

Saigon Kick L-R: Phil Varone, Jason Bieler, Matt Kramer, Tom DeFile

SAIGON KICK – 'The Lizard'

ORIGINAL RELEASE DATE – 1992

LINE UP

Matt Kramer – vocals
Jason Bieler – guitars, vocals, keyboards
Tom DeFile – bass
Phil Varone – drums, percussion

BACKGROUND

In the not-too-distant past, record companies would sign artists and let them mature over time. A case in point was the development of Florida-based quartet Saigon Kick. Their debut album, 1991's 'Saigon Kick', was greeted with positive reviews and sold a healthy amount, giving Atlantic Records the confidence to sanction a well-supported sophomore LP, happy in the knowledge that the band was on an upward trajectory.

With this kind of support, the band relished the opportunity to craft 'The Lizard'. This time around the emphasis was on finely honed songs, with more mature arrangements and memorable hooks. Saigon Kick were perceived as operating in the melodic rock zone, which was quickly becoming obsolete in the face of the grunge revolution. But, like fellow comrades Love/Hate, Skid Row, and Alice In Chains, Saigon Kick managed to inject a degree of contemporary excitement into their music that gave them an edge over others in the fading '80s rock scene. The band's ability to fuse melody and hard-edged riffs identified them as a group that wasn't hamstrung either by the past or by new trends.

Originally issued in 1992 and produced by band leader Jason Bieler, 'The Lizard' was recorded in Sweden and featured songs that easily eclipsed those on the band's debut album. Here was a group showcasing a much broader palette. A surprise hit single, 'Love Is On The Way', not only upped the band's profile, but also helped the album achieve gold status.

WHAT BAND LEADER JASON BIELER SAYS

"I'd spent some time in Sweden when I was working with vocalist Jeff Scott Soto and bassist Marcel Jacob during my spell as a member of the group Talisman. The two of them also became good friends. I was very keen to work with a particular engineer called Ronny Lahti. I really thought he was brilliant. He'd worked with the Electric Boys and I loved the sounds he got for them on their debut album [1989's 'Funk-O-Metal Carpet Ride']. So that settled things for me."

TRACKS TO CHECK OUT

The beauty of 'The Lizard' lies in its determination not to be shackled to one particular style or genre. Tracks such as 'Hostile Youth' and 'Peppermint Tribe' might evoke the sound of Kings X – groove-orientated, hard rock frenzy – but it was the mellow 'Love Is On The Way' that took Saigon Kick on a welcome journey to the singles charts.

MORE BANG FOR YOUR BUCK

The Rock Candy CD is fully remastered, features a 12-page colour booklet, enhanced artwork, previously unseen photos and a 3,500 word essay by *Rock Candy Mag* editor-at-large Malcolm Dome, including a new interview with band leader Jason Bieler.

THE WORD FROM RC BOSS DEREK OLIVER

"The Rock Candy label, we're not ashamed to say, is a vehicle for spotlighting music we love and respect, even if it was overlooked at the time or has simply faded with time. Although achieving a well-deserved gold album with 'The Lizard', Saigon Kick are rarely spoken of these days. Maybe this low-profile status is down to the band's refusal to be constrained stylistically by the predominant music of the time. This is actually a very good thing indeed. There was acknowledged tension in the Saigon Kick ranks, but Jason Bieler worked hard to harness the unease to the benefit of the music, as you can hear on 'The Lizard'."

Buy these albums and tons of other great releases at www.rockcandyrecords.com

ROCK CANDY PICKS

THE STUFF THAT'S GRABBED OUR ATTENTION

REO SPEEDWAGON 'The Early Years 1971-1977'

(HNE/CHERRY RED)

WHAT'S THE STORY?
Formed in Champaign, Illinois, in 1967 by drummer Alan Gratzer and keyboardist Neal Doughty, REO's climb to the top wasn't all plain sailing and they would go through three singers along the way. The vocalist who would help define the band's sound, Kevin Cronin, made an early appearance on second album 'R.E.O./ T.W.O' in 1972, then went AWOL for three more, before returning on the band's sixth studio outing, 1976's 'R.E.O'. This eight-CD box set features the band's first six studio releases, as well as 1977's double album 'Live: You Get What You Play For'.

WHAT DRUMMER ALAN GRATZER SAYS
"Terry Luttrell [the singer on the band's debut album] was riding home from a gig at one in the morning when he asked us to stop the car. We just thought he had to pee, but instead he went out into the middle of a cornfield and disappeared in the dark. We called for him to come back and he just said he was out there, 'talking to the man!' *That's* when we knew we needed a new singer!"

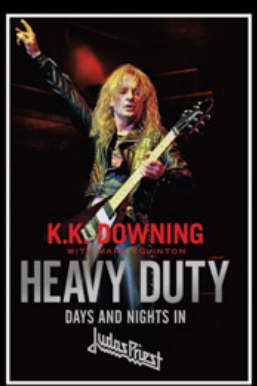
ANY EXTRAS?
Yes – from mono versions of album tracks, to two numbers that were omitted from the original single CD release of the double live – 'Gary's Guitar Solo' and 'Little Queenie'. Best of all, though, there are alternative versions of 'Ridin' The Storm Out' and 'Son Of A Poor Man' from 1973's 'Ridin' The Storm Out'. Both feature Kevin Cronin vocals, presumably recorded before he left the band to be replaced – albeit temporarily – by Mike Murphy.

HIGHLIGHTS
Revisiting the earliest days of REO's long career perfectly highlights the band's musical evolution from a 'proggy boogie woogie' band on tunes like 'Anti-Establishment Man' to a more mainstream concern on songs like 'Keep Pushin''. This bumper set's sleeve notes, penned by *Rock Candy Mag* editor-at-large Malcolm Dome, are both extensive and informative. And I for one can't wait for the second volume of the REO story (1978-1990), due out later this year.

Xavier Russell

HEAVY DUTY: Days And Nights In Judas Priest
K.K. Downing With Mark Eglinton

(DA CAPO)



WHAT'S THE STORY?
K.K. Downing, founder member of Judas Priest, talks openly about his relationships, both professional and personal, during his 40-plus years with one of the biggest bands in the history of metal. But what's also interesting is that the guitarist lifts the veil on his personal life without flinching, especially when discussing his troubled childhood.

WHAT K.K. DOWNING SAYS
"Everything I've written in this book is either how I remember it, or my opinion on events I lived through. Nothing will ever devalue my time in Judas Priest. But it's important to me that all the facts, as I see them, are laid out for the fans to laugh, cry, or grit their teeth with frustration..."

BEST BITS
Downing never hides behind the usual rock star double talk when he speaks about Priest's career. He's also perfectly prepared to share his innermost thoughts on a number of key moments in the band's history, not least the legal battle over supposed backwards messaging on Priest songs that led to a US court appearance for the group in 1990 relating to the suicide of a fan. K.K. also has a few surprises for us. Did you know that he was contemplating leaving Priest in 1991 when vocalist Rob Halford beat him to the punch? Or that Downing wishes Rod Smallwood had been Priest's manager, even though he had problems with Smallwood protégés Iron Maiden that went way back to the time the two bands toured together in 1980? Downing is never afraid to be self-critical, either, especially when trying to explain his deteriorating relationship with fellow Priest guitarist Glenn Tipton over a number of years.

DOES IT HIT THE SPOT?
It most certainly does. Whether the other members of Judas Priest will agree with some of K.K.'s analysis of the band's career is doubtful. But Downing talks articulately and easily about the way events unfolded, and makes an interesting case for the reasons why Priest weren't even bigger than they actually were. Most importantly, he also admits that the second K in 'K.K.' doesn't actually stand for anything! Rock stars, eh?

Malcolm Dome

ANGEL 'The Casablanca Years'

(CAROLINE)

WHAT'S THE STORY?
Discovered by Gene Simmons, signed to the same label as Kiss, and derided by Frank Zappa in the song 'Punky's Whips', if any band was synonymous with pomp rock – that decidedly American mix of prog, glam and hard rock – it was Washington DC quintet Angel. They never scaled the commercial heights of Kiss, but with an engaging blend of Gregg Giuffria's dominant keyboards, Punky Meadows' rocking guitars, and Frank DiMino's good-time vocals, they were always great fun. This set contains the band's five Casablanca studio albums released between 1975 and 1979, as well as the double 'Live Without A Net' from 1980 and a disc full of rarities. There's also a booklet from Angel mastermind and *Rock Candy Mag* writer Dave Reynolds.

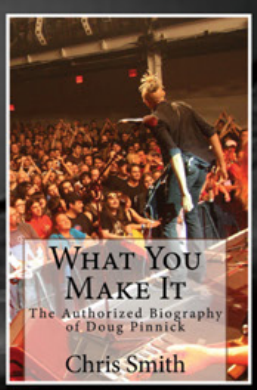
WHAT VOCALIST FRANK DIMINO SAYS
"As a band we always felt we were on the same page musically. We were a tight, high-energy group and we held our own live. It was great to be a part of that."

ANY EXTRAS?
A whole disc's worth, prosaically entitled 'Rarities', which will doubtless have Angel fans salivating. Here you'll find 17 tracks of mono mixes, single edits and B-sides, together with 'Virginia' and '20th Century Foxes' – two tracks that featured on the soundtrack to 1980 teen movie *Foxes*. Sadly we don't get 'Seduce Me Tonight', a tune that DiMino sang on the *Flashdance* soundtrack under the name Cycle V.

HIGHLIGHTS
This set shows how Angel evolved from technical prog/pomp on 1975's 'Angel' and 1976's 'Helluva Band', to pop metal by the time '78's 'White Hot' and '79's 'Sinful' appeared. The one in the middle, 1977's 'On Earth As It Is In Heaven', saw the band trying to straddle the two styles, not always successfully. Check out 'The Tower' for true pomp majesty and 'Wild And Hot' for radio rock perfection. The band fell apart in 1981, but after the odd failed attempt to dust off the white stage suits, Punky Meadows and Frank DiMino are currently back performing Angel music.

Jerry Ewing

WHAT YOU MAKE IT: The Authorized Biography of Doug Pinnick *Chris Smith* (AVAILABLE FROM AMAZON)



WHAT'S THE STORY?
This is the highly personal life story of Doug Pinnick, bass player and frontman of King's X – the band that the critics loved and that rock fans failed to honour with significant sales. Written with Pinnick's full cooperation by one-time *Kerrang!* contributor Chris Smith – who clearly knows Pinnick well – this isn't a eulogy to a 'big time Charlie' rock star. Rather, the book tries to explain the journey of a man who looks to music to save him from a certain amount of life confusion. It's atypical, which is surely a good thing in these days of formulaic, plodding biogs...

WHAT WRITER CHRIS SMITH SAYS
"Doug's story is equal parts rock'n'roll survival and personal evolution. Sometimes these paths support one another, more often they clash. Their ultimate resolution isn't just Doug's story, or a musician's story, it's a universally human story."

BEST BITS
Well, that rather depends on what you want from a book like this. If you're a Doug Pinnick music geek, then you'll probably love the frequent detailed explanations of his different approaches to music making with both King's X and a number of his side projects. If, like me, you're looking for insight into the nature of the man behind the sounds, then the stories in the book of financial hardship and wrestling with being gay will be much more user-friendly.

DOES IT HIT THE SPOT?
You most likely won't be reading this book at all unless you're already invested in King's X, so doubtless there is much to enjoy if you're of that persuasion. I personally would've liked more understanding of the interpersonal relations between Pinnick and his fellow King's X-ers, guitarist Ty Tabor and drummer Jerry Gaskill. I would also have enjoyed hearing more of Doug's own voice, given that this is a sanctioned biography. Nevertheless, Smith writes with knowledge and enthusiasm and there's no doubt that the author holds the subject matter's creative talents in very high esteem. One for connoisseurs, certainly, but a worthwhile endeavour all the same.

Howard Johnson

THE INSIDE TRACK

Yes performing at the Crystal Palace Bowl, 2 September 1972. L-R: Steve Howe (guitar), Jon Anderson (vocals), Chris Squire (bass), Alan White (drums), Rick Wakeman (keyboards)

BILLY IDOL GUITARIST **STEVE STEVENS** – AKA 'THE FINGERS OF ROCK' – GOES FOR A DEEP DIVE INTO THE MUSIC OF HIS PROG HEROES **YES**

"I STARTED PLAYING ON an old nylon string guitar when I was seven and a half, in 1967. I didn't get an electric until I was 13. I started by learning flamenco, jazz and classical stuff – it was very difficult to play traditional pop and rock stuff on a guitar like that. But the first time I heard 'Roundabout' by Yes I realised it had that nylon guitar string thing going on. I thought, 'Wow!' Here was a band that sounded so different, but was still doing something in a rock format. So I bought the 'Fragile' album [which came out in November 1971]. It had both 'Roundabout' and 'Mood For A Day' on it. Straight away I heard all these different styles of music, but in the context of a psychedelic rock band. I fell in love with Yes immediately and devoured all their stuff. I got into other progressive rock guitarists like Robert Fripp, and they were good. But Yes best seemed to encapsulate all these different styles.

"GETTING INTO Yes was a great voyage of discovery. They had a couple of early albums that featured guitarist Peter Banks, who would be replaced by Steve Howe, of course. Peter was a really interesting player. Then I started to discover how important Chris Squire was to the band. I couldn't even believe he was playing a bass on some of those records, because his style was so innovative.

"I was a total Yes fan, with pictures of the band all over my walls. I paid a huge amount of attention to listening to their records. I'd learn the guitar parts in the songs by putting the needle back down on the record over and over again. It was a real education for me. I learned all of 'Tales From Topographic Oceans' like that.

"I actually played 'Mood For A Day' to get into the La Guardia High School Of Music & Art And Performing Arts, which was the school in New York that was the inspiration for the *Fame* movie. What a weird kid I was!

"I had some really bad guitar teachers when I was growing up, but there was one guy who was lovely. He was a total jazz head and he flipped out when I took him my Yes albums. He really liked Steve Howe's guitar playing. He said, 'This guy is really great,' and explained his influences to me because he could hear the lineage. 'Oh, here's some Chet Atkins...' I didn't know who Chet Atkins was, of course, but comments like that opened up a whole other Pandora's box for me...

"I'VE SEEN Yes around a dozen times. The first time was way back in 1974 when I was 14. I caught the 'Tales From Topographic Oceans' tour at Madison Square Garden. It was an incredible performance. I also remember seeing ELP live. Just like Yes, they made me go, 'Oh man, *that's* what I want to do!' They were so far ahead of other bands.

"Of course the Yes line-up changed at the start of the '80s when [vocalist] Jon Anderson and [keyboardist] Rick Wakeman left the band. [Keyboardist] Geoff Downes and [vocalist] Trevor Horn joined from the pop group Buggles for 'Drama' in 1980 and then Trevor Rabin came on board in 1982 for what became the '90125' era. Yes became a whole different thing.

"I wasn't surprised there were changes. I'd seen the band on the 'Tormato' tour around 1978 and remember thinking things were getting a bit stale. I'd already moved on to bands like XTC and Siouxsie And The Banshees. That's no criticism of Yes, though. To have kept the band going for so long, through so many musical eras is a phenomenal achievement. I even saw Yes on a few dates with Trevor Horn fronting them and they were great.

"I ACTUALLY became quite friendly with Chris Squire [who sadly died in 2015]. We recorded together, did a couple of things. You know that expression, 'Don't meet your heroes?' Well, Chris was the exception to that rule. He was a larger-than-life rock star, but he was also very gracious. He really lived up to my expectations – and I've met a few musicians who really didn't.

"I think that most of us go to the grave loving the bands we were really into when we were 14 years old. Well for me, that band is Yes."

Steve Stevens interview by Jerry Ewing. Photos: Getty Images/Michael Putland; Mark 'Weissguy' Weiss

THE ALL-TIME CLASSIC – 'CLOSE TO THE EDGE' (1972)

"I believe that 'Close To The Edge' is Yes at the very height of their powers. People often say 'How could [drummer] Bill Bruford leave the group just as they were on the verge of becoming a massive arena band?' But I totally get why he left at that point, because this album is the absolute pinnacle of musical achievement for Yes. I could really understand the feeling he may have had that it wasn't going to get any better than this album.

"Everything that Yes should be – as a group and as an artistic statement – is on this record."

THE ONE FOR CONNOISSEURS – 'RELAYER' (1974)

"This album definitely isn't an easy listen. After Rick Wakeman first left the band [in May of 1974] they brought in [Swiss keyboardist] Patrick Moraz and he added a whole new jazz-fusion thing to the Yes sound. I liked that kind of music – bands like Return To Forever and Mahavishnu Orchestra – and Patrick gave Yes some real jazz-rock energy. He really pushed them to create an amazing sound and this is an amazing album. But I do recognise that you've got to be a real Yes fan to be able to listen to 'Relayer'. It's definitely not a 'date night' record."

THE ONE TO AVOID – 'UNION' (1991)

"I wouldn't be surprised if the Yes band members themselves agreed with this call. I don't know how many of them actually play on 'Union', as there were all sorts of stories that session players were heavily involved in the recording process. The idea behind the album was to amalgamate two different bands that featured both current and former members of Yes at the time. But it felt very much like the kind of thing a record company had put together; it wasn't an organic thing. I didn't like 'Union' the first time I heard it and I don't think I'd like it if I listened to it again now."

BEST FILM – BBC *SOUNDING OUT* (1972)

"There was a BBC series called *Sounding Out* and I found one on YouTube that featured Yes. The programme focused on a gig that was filmed on 3 October 1971 [at an English venue, The Pavilion in Hemel Hempstead.] Yes were on a promotional tour for the 'Fragile' album at the time. I could tell, because Bill Bruford's on the film and they're not playing in a very big theatre. The TV show was first broadcast on 10 January 1972, it's about 20 minutes long and features live performance interspersed with interviews with the band members.

"To me it's the very best video recording of that version of the band – and it features *the* best recorded Steve Howe guitar solo I've ever heard. You can't really ask for much more than that."

THE RARITY – 'PROGENY: SEVEN SHOWS FROM SEVENTY-TWO' (2015)

"This is a box set of live recordings from 1972. It's a 14-CD package [released in May of 2015] featuring seven complete performances from when Yes were touring 'Close To The Edge' in Canada and America in 1972.

"The very first disc is from Toronto's Maple Leaf Gardens and I believe that it's an even better band performance than the one that appeared on [the band's first live album, 1973's] 'Yessongs'. They have Rick Wakeman in one speaker and Steve Howe in the other and they complement each other so well that sometimes it's difficult even to know what instrument is playing what part. It's just incredible!"

THE INSIDE TRACK

The Yes line-up that recorded 1974's 'Relayer'. Clockwise from top: Chris Squire (bass), Patrick Moraz (keyboards), Steve Howe (guitar), Alan White (drums), Jon Anderson (vocals)

THE BEST BOOTLEG – 'THE WORD IS LIVE' (2005)

"This was originally various different bootlegs that eventually all ended up getting officially released as one three-disc box set. Disc one has a bunch of really rare stuff, including some material that the band had recorded with Peter Banks, the original guitarist, but being played here by his replacement Steve Howe. I'd never heard any of that stuff before. It was very 'as it was', if you get my meaning. You even get to hear Jon Anderson picking out girls in the audience and talking to them. You can really hear the beginnings of classic Yes here. Steve had just joined the band, and they hadn't even recorded [1971's] 'The Yes Album' at this point. They simply went out and played some dates. It's really embryonic stuff and that's totally fascinating to me."

Photos: Getty Images/Michael Ochs Archives; Getty Images/Michael Putland; Getty Images/Erica Echenberg/Redferns

Rick Wakeman in all his cloaked finery

STEVE STEVENS' YES PLAYLIST

'YOURS IS NO DISGRACE'
(from 'The Yes Album', 1971)
"Steve Howe is mind-blowingly good on the whole of 'The Yes Album', but he's especially great on this track. He really shines here and I love listening to how he uses echo, a trick he picked up from Chet Atkins. I still listen to this track and what I hear is a guitar player who's about to become a major force – which is exactly what happened!"

'CLOSE TO THE EDGE'
(from 'Close To The Edge', 1972)
"It took me years to realise that this is actually Yes doing their take on King Crimson. Chris Squire's bass playing is just out of this world on this track. If you want to know what's great about Chris Squire, then this is where you need to look."

'AND YOU AND I'
(from 'Close To The Edge', 1972)
"When I first heard this track it was the first time I'd heard Steve Howe play steel guitar, and it definitely made an impression on me. Rick Wakeman's arrangement of the song is truly amazing. Even now when I see Yes playing this tune it brings tears to my eyes. It's just so beautiful."

'SOUND CHASER'
(from 'Relayer', 1974)
"Patrick Moraz kills on this. I saw Yes on the 'Relayer' tour at the Roosevelt Stadium in Jersey City in the States in 1975. 40,000 people were there and when the band went into 'Sound Chaser' it was phenomenal. My friends were as crazy about Yes as I was, and when we saw this song being performed live it was awesome."

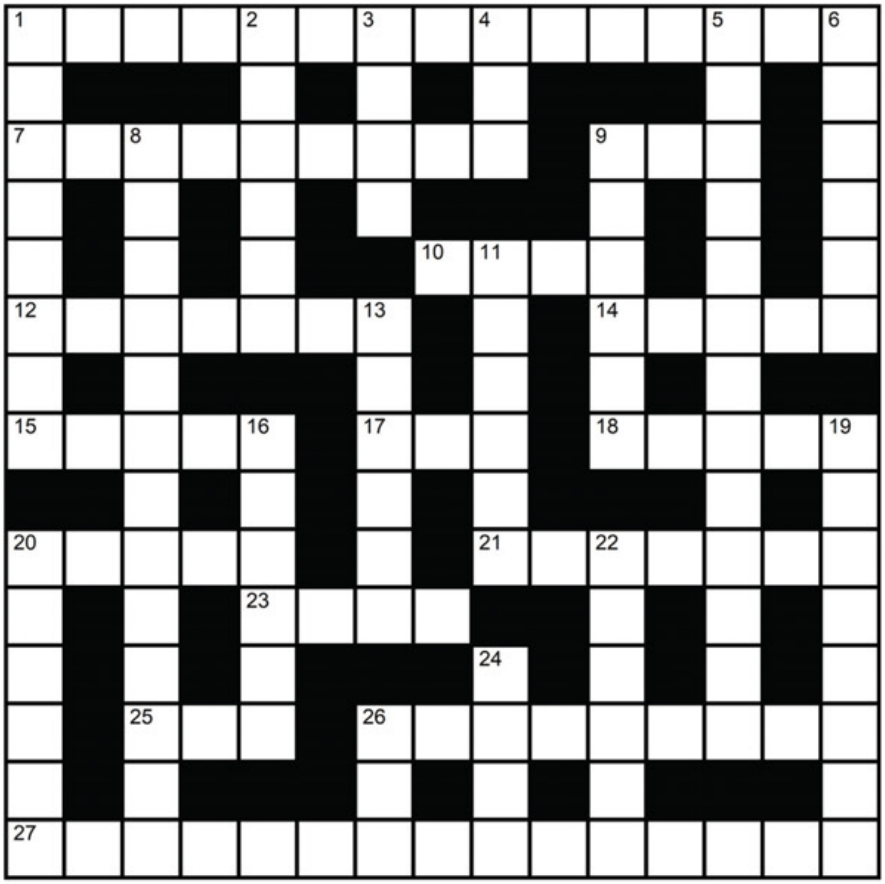
TRACKS TO AVOID

ANYTHING OFF 'UNION' (1991)
"I'm really not a fan of the music on this album. I don't need to expound. So I'd say steer clear of all of the tracks on 'Union'. Apart from that, I can only really think of one other song I'd really suggest people avoid."

'DON'T KILL THE WHALE'
(from 'Tormato', 1978)
"When Jon started writing literal lyrics I wasn't a fan. I liked all the hippy dippy sh*t. I didn't know what he was talking about when he was writing like that, but at least you could make the lyrics your own. When you realise that 'Don't Kill The Whale' was out around about the same time as the Sex Pistols' 'Never Mind The Bollocks', you realise that it was kind of over for that incarnation of Yes."

CROSSWORD

It's back – the headbangingest, headscratchingest crossword in the Western world!



The *Rock Candy* crossword is compiled by former *Kerrang!* writer **Jason Arnopp**, whose book *From The Front Lines Of Rock* gathers the highlights from his career in journalism. Featuring vintage interviews with the likes of Iron Maiden, Metallica, Kiss, Guns N' Roses, Bon Jovi and Queensrÿche, it's out on Kindle via Amazon sites worldwide or can be bought direct from Arnopp in several formats, via **payhip.com/Arnopp.**

17 ACROSS: SCORPIONS

9 DOWN: NAZARETH

21 ACROSS: QUEEN

22 DOWN: ZZ TOP

ACROSS

1 Love/Hate were in a bit of a state in this country back in 1992. (6,2,7)
7 Obscure Christian AOR merchants White Heart found themselves 'Somewhere -- -------' on a track from 1987's 'Emergency Broadcast' album. (2,7)
9 Common abbreviation of the name of North Carolina metal band featuring longstanding guitarist Woody Weatherman (1,1,1)
10 Lose the apostrophe from the first word of the Jack Clement song, '---- Be Me', covered by Foghat on their 1983 album 'Zig-Zag Walk'. (4)
12 Stand by for the name of an early Canadian speed metal trio. (7)
14 The most rock'n'roll man ever to be called Ian. (5)
15 The title of a 1985 charity single recorded by the Hear 'N Aid conglomeration. (5)
17 How weird. Scorpions always enjoyed visiting 'The ---'. (3)
18 The clothing of choice for each and every self-respecting '70s rocker. (5)
20 Surname of the guitarist who played with Tygers Of Pan Tang, Whitesnake and Blue Murder. (5)
21 Queen's 1975 ode to four wheels, 'I'm -- Love With -- ---'. (2,2,3)
23 Helix swung from the 'Hangman's ----', a track on their second independent album, 1981's 'White Lace & Black Leather'. (4)
25 'Dear ---', a rather polite track from Long Island outfit Good Rats' 1978 release 'From Rats To Riches'. (3)
26 Bloody Hell! It's only the surname of Iron Maiden's manager. (9)
27 The title of the 1989 debut studio album by West Virginia band Wrathchild America. (7,3,5)

DOWN

1 The 1989 solo album from Bad Company and Manfred Mann vocalist Robert Hart is titled 'Cries And --------'. (8)
2 '--- Your Heart ---' ordered Ronnie James Dio on 1984's 'The Last In Line' album. (3,3)
3 Early Iron Maiden issued a lyric-free warning of 'The ---- Of March'. (4)
4 Sadly departed Celtic Frost bassist, Martin Eric ---. (3)
5 Marillion weren't available for comment on this 1987 single release. (13)
6 These late '70s poppy pompsters were at home with birds and were friends with 'Mystic Sharon'. (6)
8 Legendary New York sound engineer and road manager, who worked with Kiss and Aerosmith, and particularly enjoyed the dark. (3,10)
9 Scottish rockers Nazareth's second album 'Exercises' featured a song titled '------ Her Name' in 1972. (6)
11 Longstanding UK rock venue, the Buckley ------. (6)
13 Hanoi Rocks drummer who died in Mötley Crüe vocalist Vince Neil's car on 8 December 1984. (6)
16 'Little ------', The opening track from Cheap Trick's 1985 album 'Standing On The Edge'. (6)
19 Dirty Blonde's 1989 album 'Passion' featured an ode to cars and women titled 'Ladies In --------'. (8)
20 Steely Dan dominated the airwaves back in 1978 with 'FM (No ------ At All)'. (6)
22 ZZ Top brought their own Texas sizzle to the Willie Dixon number '------ Down Easy' on 1975's 'Fandango!' album. (6)
24 The classical music element of the classic Skid Row line-up. (4)
26 Ozzy's fourth studio album, 1986's 'The Ultimate ---'. (3)

For answers go to our website www.rockcandymag.com

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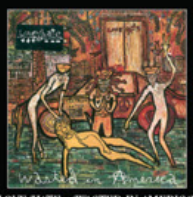
Y&T - 'MEAN STREAK'

PETER CETERA - 'S/T'

SAIGON KICK - 'S/T'

SAIGON KICK - 'THE LIZARD'

SAIGON KICK - 'WATER'


LOVE/HATE - 'WASTED IN AMERICA'

SHELTER - 'FIRST STOP'

AXIS - 'IT'S A CIRCUS WORLD'

FORTNOX - 'S/T'

NUTZ - 'LIVE CUTZ'

NUTZ - 'HARD NUTZ'

NUTZ - 'S/T'

NUTZ - 'NUTZ TOO'

MORNINGSTAR - 'S/T'

MORNINGSTAR - 'VENUS'

RIOT - 'FIRE DOWN UNDER'

MALICE - 'LICENSE TO KILL'

SHADOW KING - 'S/T'

D'MOLLS - 'S/T'

VALENTINE - 'S/T'

ST. PARADISE - 'S/T'

WARRANT - 'CHERRY PIE'

WARRANT - 'DIRTY ROTTEN FILTHY STINKING RICH'

GARY WRIGHT 'THE DREAMWEAVER'

GARY WRIGHT 'THE LIGHT OF SMILES

DOKKEN - 'BEAST FROM THE EAST'

BAD ENGLISH - 'S/T'

MAHOGANY RUSH - 'LIVE'

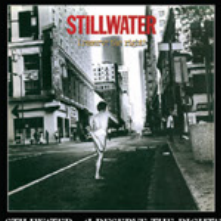
FRANK MARINO - 'WHAT'S NEXT'

FRANK MARINO 'THE POWER OF ROCK AND ROLL'

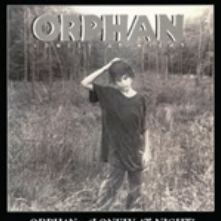
FRANK MARINO - 'JUGGERNAUT'

COMING SOON

STILLWATER - 'S/T'



STILLWATER - 'I RESERVE THE RIGHT!'



ORPHAN - 'LONELY AT NIGHT'

BROWNSVILLE - 'AIR SPECIAL'

EUROPE - 'OUT OF THIS WORLD'

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